
***The* SEVEN
MILITARY
CLASSICS
of ANCIENT
CHINA**

translation and commentary by

RALPH D. SAWYER

with Mei-chün Sawyer

BASIC BOOKS

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武經七書

To our parents

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Preface to the Paperback Edition

CHINA HAS BEEN markedly transformed over the fifteen years since the original preface to *Seven Military Classics* was written. The economy has expanded at an unprecedented rate, unrelenting modernization affects virtually every dimension of life, and the physical and intellectual horrors of the Cultural Revolution have become fading, albeit still painful, memories. Achievement of superpower status seems assured, but whether the PRC's ascension will foster worldwide prosperity or entail pervasive destruction remains uncertain.

Paradoxically, even as modern cities proliferate and the latest technologies are adapted, many aspects of its long-forgotten, vociferously deprecated traditional culture have not only reappeared but also been deliberately revitalized, in a desperate attempt to suppress escalating social unrest and retard a zealous plunge into corruption and hedonism. Even Confucianism, long viewed as a feudal anathema, is being brandished as a reformist tool by draconian authorities in the vacuum created by Marxism's demise.

Amid this turbulent milieu, China's classic military writings have soared in popularity and become virtually ubiquitous. Works such as the *Art of War* and *Six Secret Teachings* now appear in many guises, ranging from heavily annotated scholarly editions through cheap vernacular paperbacks. Comic book and lavishly illustrated editions of immense fame and popularity abound, and versions purporting to apply their contents to every conceivable realm proliferate. Numerous military terms have entered the language while the concepts and principles ground strategic thinking and continue to affect the mindset, shaping and delimiting the very categories of thought and response. The contents also provide essential materials for lengthy martial arts dramas, crucial themes for movies, and vital content for other mass media presentations.

More significantly, the classic military writings are playing an important role as the PRC consciously reformulates its martial doctrine to create

“contemporary military science with unique Chinese characteristics.” As discussed in our *Tao of Deception*, PRC think tanks such as the Academy of Military Science are examining every passage for concepts and tactical principles that can be adopted to the contemporary battlefield so as to ensure that China’s comparatively deficient armed forces will, through unexpected and unorthodox measures, be able to wrest a localized advantage and prevail. In conjunction with paradigm battles abstracted from its three-thousand-year military history, the seven books that are contained in the *Seven Military Classics*, previously confined to the martial realm, thus enjoy unprecedented readership and vibrancy.

Ralph D. Sawyer
2007

Preface

RECENT DECADES have witnessed explosive growth in American and European interest in the Far East. Books and articles about China have enjoyed popularity since the 1970s; those on Japan, especially on Japanese management practices, have proliferated since the early 1980s; and those focusing on business in terms of “corporate warfare” and theories of strategy, including Asian practices and their underlying philosophies, retain currency. The writings of Musashi, the famous Japanese swordsman, and Sun-tzu, the ancient Chinese military theorist, have been repeatedly translated, investigated, and discussed. However, as interesting as they and a few books from the martial arts have proven to be, the vast Chinese military corpus—despite its historical importance and contemporary significance—remains unknown in the West.

Chinese military thought probably originated with neolithic village conflicts four or five thousand years ago, perhaps even as mythologized in the clash of legendary cultural heroes and Sage Emperors. Subsequently, because men were compelled to direct their ingenuity toward combat, weapons were developed, tactics evolved, and power structures arose. Eventually, dominant figures—perhaps clan or lineage chiefs commanding more-warlike peoples—imposed their wills over other groups and widening domains and some groups became significant political powers. At the dawn of the historical age, as preserved in early written materials and revealed by artifacts, frequent, intense clashes were already occurring between these contending forces as they evolved into states and as powerful individuals sought to establish sole rule over the realm and to found dynastic houses. Thereafter the scope of battle expanded; the strength and effectiveness of weapons increased; and military organization, tactics, and technology all developed. Eventually, battlefield lessons and command experience became the focus of conscious study; efforts were made to preserve the insights and avoid the errors of the past; and the science of military tactics and strategy was born.

By the second century B.C. China had already passed through a thousand years of almost unrelenting conflict and had been brutally unified into a vast, powerful, imperially directed entity. Along the way, skilled commanders appeared, and major battles were fought. Campaigns became interminable, and the scale of destruction was immense, consuming both men and the thoughts they had committed to writing. However, among the small number of military writings that survived until unification, there were six major ones, including Sun-tzu's famous *Art of War*. They continued to be studied and transmitted down through the centuries until the remnants were collected and edited in the Sung dynasty around twelve hundred years later. Combined with a T'ang dynasty work, they compose the *Seven Military Classics*, a compilation that comprised the orthodox foundations for military thought and the basis for the imperial examinations required for martial appointment.

In the early 1970s, archaeologists excavating the Han dynasty tomb of a high-ranking official discovered a large number of immensely valuable texts written on remarkably well preserved bamboo slips. The military works among them include major portions of several of the *Seven Military Classics* and extensive fragments of Sun Pin's *Military Methods*. Although this book—by Sun-tzu's descendant—appeared in the bibliographic listings compiled in the Han dynasty, it had apparently vanished in the Han and been lost for over two thousand years. This important find thus increased the total extant military materials from the ancient period to eight classic works in all, supplemented by a few hundred other writings of various, but definitely later, dates.

Although tactical studies continued to be written throughout Chinese history, much of the vast military corpus has undoubtedly been lost over the centuries through carelessness, natural disasters, deliberate destruction, and warfare. However, ancient epigraphic materials and such early historical records as the *Tso chuan* and *Shih chi* also chronicle the exploits of generals and kings; the *Twenty-five Histories* preserves extensive information about men and actions; and Warring States philosophical works contain discussions of military issues. Thus resources abound, but only a part of the historical writings, including the complete *Tso chuan*, and essentially two of the *Seven Military Classics* (Sun-tzu's *Art of War*—three major versions, several minor ones—and the *Wu-tzu*—which appears as an appendix to Griffith's translation) have been translated and published.

Far from having vanished and being forgotten, these ancient Chinese military works have extensively influenced twentieth-century thought and are experiencing a new vitality in Asia. Not only in the military realm—through-

out the century they have been thoroughly studied in Japan and China—do they continue to be discussed, but also in the business and personal spheres their resurgence is particularly evident. In the 1980s a management book that revived Sun-tzu's thought and employed the revitalized figures of several ancient martial heroes to instruct companies in the basics of business and marketing became a bestseller in the draconian Communist environment of the People's Republic of China and eventually in capitalist Hong Kong as well. Japanese companies have regularly held study groups to seek insights that may be implemented as corporate strategy. Koreans, enduring intense international pressure to revalue their currency, open their markets, and submit to trade limitations just when prosperity is attainable, are discovering strategies for international business warfare in these books.

In Taiwan, where companies confront a situation similar to Korea's, books applying the thoughts of the ancient strategists to life, business, sports, and the stock market have suddenly surged in popularity, even though modernists have ignored and scorned them for decades. Perhaps more astounding is the penchant of Japanese writers to apply principles and tactics from the *Seven Military Classics* to all the complexities of modern society; they use such tactics, for example, for successful human relations, romantic liaisons, and company infighting. In addition to at least one scholarly translation, several new paperbacks offering simplified renditions and popularized expansions of selected teachings are published annually in Japan. The ubiquitous *salaryman* may be seen reading them while commuting to work, and there are even comic-book editions to satisfy those so inclined. Naturally, tactics from the classics also frequently appear in novels, movies, and on television, and their words are quoted in contemporary media throughout Asia.

There is a great temptation, given the extensive materials rapidly becoming available from diverse sources, to undertake a truly comprehensive introduction to the entire military enterprise in Ancient China. Many topics critical to understanding strategy, tactics, and the evolution of military thought merit exploration and analysis. However, we have consciously focused upon depicting the historical context and reviewing the essential material aspects, such as armor and weapons, rather than ineffectually sketching comprehensive intellectual issues. Although we have not totally neglected the latter, exploring topics such as the relationships of Taoism and military thought in at least cursory fashion in the introductions and the extensive notes, these areas must largely be consigned to another work and to expert monographs. Simi-

this work, and the survivors from Harvard would perhaps be astonished to learn that I have been carrying on the Chinese tradition of private scholarship over these many years.

Whereas I am responsible for the translations, introductions, and notes, Mei-chün Lee (Sawyer) has not only been an active participant in our discussions and studies over the years but also undertook numerous burdens associated with the detailed research of such historical issues as the evolution of weapons. She also contributed immeasurably through her insightful readings of the translations and the tedious investigation and comparison of various modern commentaries. Her collaborative efforts greatly aided my understanding of many issues and improved the overall work significantly, all while she continued to fulfill her responsibilities in our consulting operations.

Finally we would like to thank Westview Press, in particular, Peter Kracht, senior editor, for his efforts on this project. We have benefited greatly from Westview's editorial support and from the intensive, detailed reading of the translation provided through their auspices by Professor Robin D.S. Yates. Many of his numerous emendations and general suggestions substantially improved the work, and all his criticisms stimulated a careful reexamination of the texts and many additional materials; nevertheless, final responsibility for their evaluation and integration, where accepted, remains with the translators.

Others who assisted, especially in locating articles and textual materials in the United States and Asia, include Miao Yong-i, Marta Hanson, Yuriko Baer, Anton Stetzko, and Zhao Yong; Lorrie Stetzko provided expertise on horses and the intricacies of riding; and Bob Matheney and Max Gartenberg essentially made the project possible. We express our deep appreciation to all these people and to Lee T'ing-jung, who has honored the work with his calligraphy.

Ralph D. Sawyer

A Note on the Translation and Pronunciation

THE TRANSLATION is based upon and rigorously follows the so-called Ming edition of the (Sung dynasty) *Seven Military Classics*, which contains and benefits from Liu Yin's consistent commentary—the *chih-chieh*, or “direct explanations”—throughout all seven books. However, although many of his comments are illuminating and even critical to understanding the actual text, scholarship continued to advance, and over the centuries, a few valuable commentaries and several variant editions that have furthered the process of understanding—particularly of the *Art of War*—have come out. Where the Ming text appears obviously defective, recourse for emendation is made first to the Sung edition and then to other variants. Full information on the individual variants employed is given in the introduction and the notes for each book, and the basic editions are listed in the bibliography.

We have sought to employ judiciously contemporary scholarship irrespective of its political perspective and to integrate insights provided by archaeological discoveries. The discovery of early versions, although dramatic and invaluable, precipitates the problem about which text to translate: the “original” versions, which entail numerous problems of their own, or the Sung *Seven Military Classics* edition, which has been historically available and influential for nine centuries. Because most of the *Seven Military Classics* have not previously been translated, we have chosen to make the traditional edition available first. Accordingly, we have used the newly recovered textual materials to make emendations only where they resolve highly problematic or completely incomprehensible passages, always annotating appropriately. Although we have refrained from indiscriminately revising the traditional text, significant differences between the newly recovered fragments and the historically transmitted edition are generally recorded in the notes.

In providing a translation for a general readership, rather than a somewhat more literal (and some would claim precise) version for sinologists, we

hope to emulate the vibrant translations of Professor Burton Watson and thereby make these amazing texts accessible to the widest possible audience. We have thus avoided military jargon because, apart from the thorny question about each term's appropriateness, such terms would render the translation less comprehensible to anyone lacking military experience or unacquainted with military history.

Unfortunately, neither of the two commonly employed orthographies makes the pronunciation of romanized Chinese characters easy. Each system has its stumbling blocks and we remain unconvinced that the Pinyin *qi* is inherently more comprehensible than the Wade-Giles *ch'i*, although it is certainly no less comprehensible than *j* for *r* in Wade-Giles. However, as many of the important terms may already be familiar to Western readers and previous translations have employed Wade-Giles, we have opted to use that system throughout our work. Well-known cities, names, and books—such as Peking—are retained in their common form, and books and articles published with romanized names and titles also appear in their original form.

As a guide to pronunciation, we offer the following notes on the significant exceptions to normally expected sounds:

- t*, as in *Tao*: without apostrophe, pronounced like *d*
- p*, as in *ping*: without apostrophe, pronounced like *b*
- ch*, as in *chuang*: without apostrophe, pronounced like *j*
- hs*, as in *hsi*: pronounced *sh*
- j*, as in *jen*: pronounced like *r*

Thus, the name of the famous Chou dynasty is pronounced as if written “jou” and sounds just like the English name “Joe.”

Chronology of Approximate Dynastic Periods

<i>Dynastic Period</i>	<i>Years</i>
LEGENDARY SAGE EMPERORS	2852–2255 B.C.
HSIA	2205–1766
SHANG	1766–1045
CHOU	1045–256
Western Chou	1045–770
Eastern Chou	770–256
<i>Spring and Autumn</i>	722–481
<i>Warring States</i>	403–221
CH'IN	221–207
FORMER HAN	206 B.C.–8 A.D.
LATER HAN	23–220
SIX DYNASTIES	222–589
SUI	589–618
T'ANG	618–907
FIVE DYNASTIES	907–959
SUNG	960–1126
SOUTHERN SUNG	1127–1279
YÜAN (<i>Mongol</i>)	1279–1368
MING	1368–1644
CH'ING (<i>Manchu</i>)	1644–1911

General Introduction and Historical Background of the Classics

MILITARY THOUGHT, the complex product of both violent war and intellectual analysis, suffered from disparagement and disrepute during almost all the past two millennia in Imperial China. Ignoring the original teachings of Confucius, self-styled Confucians eschewed—whether sincerely or hypocritically—the profession of arms and all aspects of military involvement from the Han dynasty on, growing more vociferous in their condemnation with the passing of centuries.¹ However, regardless of these people's civilized and cultured self-perception, the nation could not be without armies or generals, particularly in the face of constant “barbarian” threats and ongoing conflicts with volatile nomadic peoples. Accordingly, a number of early military treatises continued to be valued and studied and thereby managed to survive, while the turmoil of frequent crises inevitably fostered generations of professional military figures and additional strategic studies. Yet compared to the Confucian classics and various other orthodox writings, the military corpus remained minuscule, numbering at most a few hundred works.

Individual chapters of several writings by influential philosophers of the Warring States period (403–221 B.C.),² such as Lord Shang, also focused upon military matters, often with radical impact.³ Many famous thinkers, including Hsün-tzu and Han Fei-tzu,⁴ pondered the major questions of government administration and military organization; motivation and training; the nature of courage; and the establishment of policies to stimulate the state's material prosperity. The *Tso chuan* and other historical writings similarly record the thoughts of many key administrators and preserve the outlines of famous strategies, although their presentation of battlefield tactics is minimal.

A number of the ancient strategic monographs became relatively famous, and scholars in the Sung period (circa A.D. 1078) collected, edited, and assembled the six important survivors, augmenting them with a T'ang dynasty

book; the final product was the *Seven Military Classics*. Thus codified, the seven works thereafter furnished the official textual foundation for government examinations in military affairs and concurrently provided a common ground for tactical and strategic conceptualization.

Despite incessant barbarian incursions and major military threats throughout its history, Imperial China was little inclined to pursue military solutions to aggression—except during the ill-fated expansionistic policies of the Former Han dynasty, or under dynamic young rulers, such as T'ang T'ai-tsung, during the founding years of a dynasty. Rulers and ministers preferred to believe in the myth of cultural attraction whereby their vastly superior Chinese civilization, founded upon Virtue⁵ and reinforced by opulent material achievements, would simply overwhelm the hostile tendencies of the uncultured. Frequent gifts of the embellishments of civilized life, coupled with music and women, it was felt, would distract and enervate even the most warlike peoples. If they could not be either overawed into submission or bribed into compliance, other mounted nomadic tribes could be employed against the troublemakers, following the time-honored tradition of "using barbarian against barbarian."⁶

According to Confucian thought, which became the orthodox philosophy and prescribed state view in the Former Han, the ruler need only cultivate his Virtue, accord with the seasons, and implement benevolent policies in order to be successful in attracting universal support and fostering stability. Naturally, there were dissenting views, and even Mencius (371–289 B.C.), the second great Confucian, advocated punitive military expeditions to chastise evil rulers and relieve the people's suffering. However, except under rulers such as Sui Yang-ti (reigned A.D. 605–617), who sought to impose Chinese suzerainty on external regions—and thereby impoverished the nation—military affairs were pressed unwillingly; most of the bureaucracy tended to disdain anything associated with the military and the profession of arms.

Evolution of Conflict and Weapons in China

The Shang

Over the centuries Chinese military thought mirrored the evolution in weapons, economic conditions, and political power while creating the framework for strategic conceptualization and stimulating the development of battle-field methods. Tactics appropriate to the dawn of the historical Shang period changed in response to increased manpower, greater speed and mobility, and

the invention of more-powerful shock and missile weapons. However, a critical kernel of thought that focused on basic questions, including organization, discipline, evaluation, objectives, and fundamental principles, retained its validity and continued to be applied until the Ch'in eventually conquered and unified the empire, thereby signifying the end of the Warring States period.

The Shang dynasty was a theocratic state whose power arose initially from, and continued to depend upon, the military skills of the nobility, in conjunction with its religious beliefs and institutions.⁷ The populace was effectively divided into four classes: ruling families; royal clan members, many of whom were enfeoffed or served as officials, and other members of the nobility; common people, who were essentially serfs; and slaves.⁸ The king exercised great power over a central area and enjoyed the allegiance of various lords in the peripheral territory. The nobility, which was educated and cultured, lived in well-organized cities marked by massive complex buildings, such as palaces and temples.⁹ The common people, who dwelled in semi-earthen huts, farmed or practiced various specialized crafts during most of the year, although they were also required to provide conscript labor and even to mobilize to assist military campaigns.

Bronze technology advanced rapidly from the official inception of the Shang (traditionally dated as 1766 B.C., when T'ang I mounted his victorious campaign over the Hsia) until its collapse at the hands of the Chou, about 1045 B.C.¹⁰ Intricately detailed ritual vessels, essential to the ancestor worship that underlay the king's power, provide dramatic evidence of the technological achievements and the government's effective management and monopoly of productive resources.¹¹ Although the weapons for the nobility were fashioned primarily from bronze, the raw materials for agricultural implements and the arms carried by the commoners were largely confined to stone, wood, and animal bones.¹² Millet and, later, wheat, were the staple crops, and they were stored in centralized granaries after harvesting. Rice was known, but it remained an expensive luxury even for the ruler because it was cultivated mainly in the south.¹³ The level of material culture had progressed sufficiently to sustain cities with large populations based upon organized farming and systematic exploitation of the hunt. Some animals—such as sheep, oxen, pigs, and dogs—had been domesticated,¹⁴ and both silk and hemp were produced. Vessels for ordinary use were made of pottery, which was marked by intricate designs.

Prior to the Shang dynasty, armed conflict essentially consisted of raids by and engagements between neolithic villages, although certain clan chiefs ap-

parently developed local power bases and some regional strongmen emerged, such as those who founded the Hsia dynasty. However, with the rise of the Shang and the imposition of significant central authority (although not administration), a royal standing army of about a thousand was maintained. The number could be expanded as needed: The subservient lineage chiefs and state rulers would be ordered to furnish supporting armies. Although the king normally commanded in person, a rudimentary military bureaucracy with specialized officials already existed.¹⁵ A royal campaign against border enemies might require three to five thousand men, and a campaign directed toward an insolent state as many as thirteen thousand.¹⁶ Military actions required from a few days to perhaps three months; the actual battles generally were settled in a single confrontation, although engagements lasting several days have also been recorded.¹⁷ The army was divided into three sections—left, right, and middle¹⁸—formed from two types of units: loosely organized infantry, conscripted from the privileged populace,¹⁹ which acted in a supporting role; and chariots, manned by the nobles fulfilling their martial responsibilities as warriors and sustainers of the state.

Shang warfare objectives included the imposition or reinforcement of royal suzerainty, the mass capture of prisoners, and the seizure of riches.²⁰ Control over areas outside the central core continued to be imposed through a vassal-like network, rather than through integration under a centrally administered bureaucracy. Plunder increased the wealth of the royal house and also furnished the means to reward loyal service. Some prisoners were enslaved and forced to work in either agricultural or domestic tasks, but large numbers were sacrificed as part of Shang religious ceremonies.²¹

During the several hundred years of Shang rule, bronze weapons formed an integral part of every Shang warrior's arsenal.²² The preferred weapon was the *ko* (halberd, or dagger-ax),²³ supplemented by spears²⁴ and the compound bow.²⁵ Bronze-tipped arrows, propelled by reflex bows whose pull may have reached 160 pounds, provided effective action at a distance. Daggers and hatchets were available for close fighting; leather armor and large shields—the latter used in coordinated fighting tactics—offered considerable protection against shock weapons and projectiles.²⁶ Bronze helmets were fabricated to deflect missiles and glancing blows, and thin bronze plates were affixed as outer protection on both armor and shields. According to Warring States theory, weapons were usually of mixed type, providing the means for both aggressive and defensive action at close and long ranges. However, the sword evolved slowly, apparently from daggers or perhaps the dagger-ax, and true swords did not become common until the middle of the Warring States period.²⁷

The chariot functioned as the basic fighting unit during the late Shang, Western Chou, and Spring and Autumn (722–481 B.C.) periods; it remained important until well into the Warring States (403–221), when it was gradually supplanted by large infantry masses and eventually, during the third century B.C., began to be supplemented by the cavalry. Chinese tradition portrays the Shang as having employed seventy chariots during the campaign of rectification to oust the evil Hsia dynasty.²⁸ However, twentieth-century archaeological discoveries, supplemented by textual research, indicate that the chariot, rather than being an indigenous development, did not reach China from Central Asia until the middle of the Shang dynasty—approximately 1300 to 1200 B.C.²⁹ Initially, the use of chariot was probably confined to ceremonies and transportation and only gradually was expanded to the hunt and eventually to warfare. Epigraphic materials provide evidence that the Shang relied upon infantry units of nobility to confront their enemies even after the integration of the chariot into their military organization. In fact, throughout the Shang, the chariot may have remained a prestige symbol; its function during military engagements was restricted to providing transport mobility and serving as a command platform rather than constituting a significant military weapon.

The chariots of the late Shang and subsequent Chou periods normally carried three men: the driver in the center, the archer on the left, and a warrior with a dagger-ax on the right. Five chariots constituted a squad, the basic functional unit, and five squads composed a brigade. Each chariot had a complement of 10 to 25 close-supporting infantry, with an additional vanguard of perhaps 125 men in later times.³⁰ A Shang team consisted of two horses, and the rectangular chariot rode on two sturdy, multispoked wheels. Training for warfare included large-scale royal hunts that utilized chariots, although given the difficulty of developing driving skills and the fighting expertise appropriate to a racing chariot, far more practice must have been necessary.³¹ It was an expensive weapon that required craftsmen to build and maintain; thus its use was confined to the nobility, minimally supported by conscripted commoners. Battles accordingly resolved into a number of individual clashes, with personal combat supposedly governed by appropriate ceremonial constraints (probably a later romanticization). A few scholars have seen references to hunting on horseback in certain sentences, but these claims are generally discounted: The horse was employed only in conjunction with the chariot. However, lacking stirrups and a saddle and hampered by his long robes, the mounted rider could not become an effective military element until the third century B.C.

The Chou

The Chou came to power by overthrowing the Shang in a decisive battle at Mu-yeh after many years of stealthy preparation and the gradual expansion of their power base through carefully wrought alliances, the submission of some smaller states, and the subjugation of other clans and peoples. Possibly descendants of the Hsia,³² the Chou originally dwelled to the north but had been forced south into the Wei River valley by more-aggressive peoples.³³ As the Chou were situated on the periphery of Shang culture, they were able to assimilate many of the material and cultural achievements of Shang civilization in relative freedom while successfully developing a strong agricultural base, indigenous technology, and their own cultural identity. External barbarian pressures stimulated their military skills, organizational abilities, and tactical thought simultaneously, and the Shang even entrusted them with the task of subjugating rebellious peoples in the west, which allowed the Chou to increase their military prowess.³⁴ When they mounted their final campaign against the debauched, enervated Shang, the Chou's weapons and implements were similar to the Shang's. Perhaps the only Chou innovation was the extensive employment of chariots, facilitating more-rapid movement and the conveying of greater quantities of weapons and supplies.³⁵ The Chou's victory probably stemmed in large part not only from the Shang's disorganization but also from the exhaustion suffered by the Shang in fighting off hostile nomadic peoples to the north and east and from their large-scale commitment to a southern military expedition at the moment of attack.³⁶ The Chou's overall campaign and tactics (particularly if the *Book of Documents* and the *Six Secret Teachings* preserve any reliable material) approached the conflict from a new perspective—abandoning ritualistic, formal combat for effective revolutionary activity.³⁷

The Chou kings were confronted with the immediate problem of ruling an empire of disparate peoples and far-flung territories with only a small Chou population. Although the Chou had apparently enjoyed the allegiance of roughly eight hundred states in the final campaign against the Shang, many had also opposed them. These enemy peoples, the tens of thousands of Shang nobility, and even the populace of their own allies all had to be effectively controlled, and smoldering rebellions quenched. Immediately after the famous battle at Mu-yeh, King Wu had the T'ai Kung secure the Chou hold over the surrounding area. Next, when returning to the capital, the Chou vanquished a number of recalcitrant states lying along the corridor of their march.³⁸ Finally, the Western Chou consolidated their rule through several political and military measures, the most important of which was the en-

feoffment of powerful clan members among both allied and dissident states. Each person so enfeoffed would establish a collateral family line and would emigrate with his family members, retainers, and military forces. They would constitute a Chou enclave among the local people and would immediately construct a walled town, which would function as the Chou military, political, economic, administrative, and cultural center.³⁹

The Chou also forced thousands of Shang noble families to emigrate to the eastern capital region, where they could be adequately supervised and controlled, although they were allowed to retain most of their own officials, customs, and laws.⁴⁰ Thereafter, the early Chou kings imposed their rule and consolidated their power through close connections with all the vassals thus established. The obedience of these feudal lords was ensured by their participation in clan activities and power, was reinforced by their military and political inferiority, and was emphasized by their relative isolation—all of which necessitated mutual cooperation under the king's directives. The Shang's theocratic character was displaced by a more worldly approach, although the Chou king preserved and emphasized his right to sacrifice to the ancestors, whose intimate involvement in state affairs remained necessary, and to Heaven, which had sanctified Chou's revolutionary activity.

In addition to maintaining six royal armies⁴¹ and posting garrison units throughout the realm, the Chou also incorporated eight armies from the vanquished Shang and could summon the forces of their own vassals as necessary. These units were still composed essentially of nobility, although they were assisted by commoners, personal retainers, and servants in a secondary role. No doubt the *shih*—minor descendants of the ruling house, younger sons of earls and dukes, and other members of the lesser nobility—also furnished many of the combatants and foot support. Throughout the Western Chou period, the actual fighting was conducted by men of rank and was marked increasingly by mutual deference and respect, with the chariot dominating as the focus of power and mobility.

The Western Chou

Following the final conquest of the peripheral areas and their integration under central authority through the imposition of a feudal system, the first few hundred years of the Western Chou period witnessed no dramatic changes in military technology or strategy. Armor more suited to the increasingly active role played by infantrymen appeared and evolved, thanks to improvements in tanning and leather-working capabilities. Coincident with the consistent advances in metallurgical skills, the shape of weapons continued to evolve slowly, becoming longer, stronger, and more complex, eventually resulting in

the development of the true sword, which appeared in limited quantities by the end of the Western Chou in 771 B.C. However, long weapons persisted—for fighting either from chariots or dismounted—with the halberd (dagger-ax) predominating.

After only four generations, the central power of the Western Chou began to erode, dissipated partly by fatal expansionist campaigns into the south. Early on, the Western Chou became preoccupied with barbarian threats from the north and west, and they were impoverished as the kings continued to grant fiefs and rewards to the loyal vassals who sustained the government. Consequently, the feudal lords gradually rose in power, and although still reluctantly obedient to the king's demands, they became increasingly self-conscious about their regional identities, particularly as they interacted with local peoples and cultures. The ruling house was also plagued by weak and incompetent rulers, some of whom had obviously forgotten that King Chou's debauchery was among the justifications cited when King Wu presumptuously claimed the sanction of the Mandate of Heaven. Eventually, in 771 B.C., a Chou king, restored to the throne through the efforts of vassal states, was compelled to move the capital ignominiously to the east to avoid barbarian pressures and prolong the myth of dynasty. Ironically, one of his defensive actions was to enfeoff the ancestors of the state of Ch'in as a reward for their horsebreeding efforts, in the expectation that they (who were semibarbarians themselves) would form a bulwark against the nomadic tide.

The Spring and Autumn

The Spring and Autumn period (722–481 B.C.), named after the famous Confucian classic chronicling the era, witnessed the rise of state power, development of internecine strife, and destruction of numerous political entities. At its inception, descendants of the various Chou feudal lords still ruled in most states, generally in conjunction with other members of their immediate families and the local nobility. Although they appeared to exercise supreme power, their positions depended largely upon the kinship system and the state as extensions of the greater clan. With the Chou's continued decline, the states were effectively freed of their subservient status and therefore were able to exercise increasing independence in their activities. Their new assertiveness reflected not only the shift in the balance of power from a central authority to peripheral actors but also the distinct weakening of the original ties of kinship upon which enfeoffment had been based. The passing of generations, combined with the inherent difficulties of traveling to the capital to participate actively in the Chou court, had contributed to this estrangement. Although the feudal lords continued to seek Chou sanctification

and strongmen later appeared to wield power as hegemons in the dynasty's name, their acquiescence in major political and military affairs had to be sought—rather than being mandated—by the king. Freed of old constraints, the feudal lords focused on internal strife and interstate conflict instead of devoting themselves to performing the duties of vassals.

The locus of state power also tended to shift from the enfeoffed ruling house to the contending parties. From the beginning to the middle of the era, the ministerial families—mostly collateral descendants of the first feudal lord—grew more powerful. In many states they even wrested control of the government from the legitimate line, only to exterminate each other in the next century. By the end of the period the surviving states all had effective despots—either members of the founding family who had managed to re seize power or survivors from one of the great families that had usurped the throne. Because more than a hundred states were annexed or extinguished during the Spring and Autumn period—with their ruling clans and great families reduced to commoners, enslaved, or killed—much of the original feudal nobility ceased to exist.⁴²

As a result of the predatory campaigns of the stronger states, the scope of warfare in the Spring and Autumn period increased dramatically. It necessarily involved greater numbers of peasants as integral elements because it could not depend solely upon the nobility. Sustained combat, at least on open terrain, apparently remained centered on the chariot supported by infantry forces, which grew more and more numerous. Concepts of chivalry initially prevailed, and the ethics of battle dictated adherence to the *li* (forms of propriety), although conscripted infantry were little bound by them. Within a century, however, only the foolish and soon-to-be-defeated were burdened by the old code of ethics, and the ancient style of individual combat—despite personal challenges still offered to instigate battles—was outmoded.⁴³

Early in the period, campaign armies consisted of roughly several hundred to a thousand chariots, accompanied by perhaps ten thousand men. However, by the end of the Spring and Autumn period in 481 B.C., the strong states of Ch'in and Ch'i fielded approximately four thousand chariots each, supported by forty thousand infantrymen. Cavalry remained unknown, and in 541 B.C. the Chin commander even compelled his reluctant chariot forces to dismount and—as infantrymen—engage barbarian foot soldiers.⁴⁴

Combat weapons throughout the period were similar to those of the Western Chou, with the infantrymen depending more upon spears and short swords than the dagger-ax (halberd), which was the weapon par excellence of charioteers.⁴⁵ Metalworking skills continued to advance, resulting in

stronger, sharper, larger, and more-deadly combat tools. Yet bronze technology remained the norm, with the newly discovered processes of iron and steel technology (in the late Spring and Autumn period) confined largely to the production of agricultural implements.⁴⁶

Wars occurred frequently, and even the most powerful state, should it fail to prepare its defenses and train its soldiers, could be vanquished. Consequently, the recognition and retention of individuals proficient in the military arts became essential, and rewards—including position, honors, and rank—for valor, strength, and military achievements were initiated. Basic physical qualifications for members of the standing army and for those selected to more elite units were maintained.⁴⁷

As talent grew in importance, resulting in social mobility, bureaucracies staffed by capable individuals began to expand, supplementing and then displacing government by members of the ruler's clan and the entrenched nobility. More-direct forms of administration, through the establishment of districts rather than through enfeoffment, apparently emerged, permitting the central government to wield greater power over the entire state. Peasants slowly began to gain land tenancy instead of being serfs; they prospered economically as property gradually became a transferable commodity rather than the sole possession of the king.

The Warring States Period

At the beginning of the Warring States period in 403 B.C., the pace of events accelerated. The conflicts of the Spring and Autumn period had segmented China into seven powerful survivor-states,⁴⁸ each contending for control of the realm, and fifteen weaker states for them to prey upon. The feudal lords had by then evolved into despotic monarchs who were compelled to nurture the development of extensive economic and political bureaucracies just to survive. In order to suppress external threats effectively, virtually every ruler had to expand his state's agricultural base. The immigration of disaffected people from other states was encouraged by policies providing them with land, and tenancy and landownership continued their swift development. After 500 B.C. iron implements came into general use, and drainage and irrigation projects vastly increased the food reserves—and therefore strength—of some areas. Trade and commerce flourished, and as a result, a class of influential merchants arose, although they continued to be officially despised.

During the Warring States period, the scale of conflict surged phenomenally, sustained by the increasing agricultural productivity and expanding material prosperity. In the Shang a few thousand men once had constituted an army, whereas now the weaker states easily fielded 100,000 and the

strongest, in the third century B.C., reportedly maintaining a standing army of nearly a million, is said to have even mobilized 600,000 for a single campaign. In the battle between Ch'in and Ch'u the total number of combatants apparently exceeded a million, an astounding figure even after discounting for inaccuracy and exaggeration. Numerical strength had become critical, for in the previous campaign Ch'in, with 200,000 soldiers, had suffered a severe defeat. Naturally, casualties also escalated rapidly, with 100,000 from Wei dying at the battle of Ma-ling in 341 B.C.; 240,000 in the combined forces of Wei and Han perishing at I-ch'üeh in 295 B.C.; and 450,000 men of Ch'u being slaughtered at Ch'ang-p'ing in 260 B.C. Campaigns of such magnitude required lengthy periods for logistical preparation, mobilization, and engagement. Instead of a few days or weeks on the march, with perhaps a couple of days in battle, as in the Shang, months and even years were necessary, with the battles raging for tens of days, or stalemates persisting for a year or more.

Managing the employment of such vast resources and manpower demanded great expertise, and the profession of arms quickly developed. Whereas the newly free masses were generally registered and subjected to military training on a seasonal basis and were conscripted for combat when needed, the army's core had to be composed of practiced, disciplined officers and soldiers. Drill manuals and deployment methods, as well as the tactics they would be designed to execute, suddenly became indispensable. An extensive body of military theory appeared, stimulated not only by battlefield and training requirements but also by new political theories and individual philosophies. Numerous military books—remnants of which survive—were no doubt composed during the early part of the Warring States, and their theories found rigorous employment thereafter.

The commander's qualifications and responsibilities also changed during the period, with strategy becoming so complex that the replacement of a general could, and frequently did, result in an army's defeat and the endangerment of an entire nation. Although rulers continued to meddle in army matters—with catastrophic results—often at the instigation of jealous ministers or corrupt officials acting on behalf of foreign powers, in general, professional officers who specialized solely in military affairs appeared. Early in the Warring States period the ideal commander was normally an effective, even exemplary, civilian administrator, such as Wu Ch'i, but toward the end, the civilian realm became increasingly estranged from the realities of warfare.⁴⁹

During the Shang and early Chou periods, battles were fought on agricultural and otherwise open, undefended terrain, with mobilized armies encountering only scattered cities during their advances. Some fortifications

seem to have always existed—such as the famous thick neolithic and Shang dynasty stamped-earth walls that are still being discovered—but forces could essentially roam through the countryside unhampered until encountering them. In the Warring States period the feudal lords undertook the expanded defense of borders, constructing “great walls,” ramparts, forts, and guard towers throughout the countryside to defend the entire territory against incursion.⁵⁰ States protected their land more than their people, and the objective of warfare changed as each state sought not to capture prisoners and plunder for riches but to vanquish its enemies by seizing their lands, exterminating their armies, gaining political control of their populace, and administratively annexing their territory.

Fortified cities, previously military and administrative centers, grew enormously in significance as industry, trade, and population all flourished, and they became focal points in the road network. Accordingly, whereas in the Western Chou and Spring and Autumn periods it was advisable to circumvent these isolated cities rather than to waste men and resources besieging and assaulting them, their capture or destruction now assumed critical importance. Techniques for assault and defense advanced simultaneously, with siege engines, mobile shields, battering rams, catapults, mobile towers, and similar mobile devices appearing in substantial numbers. Specialists in the technologies of assault and defense were needed: The Mohists, who created and mastered defensive techniques and measures, became famous for their dedication to assisting the targets of aggression. Therefore, Sun-tzu’s condemnation of besieging and assaulting cities had become outdated by the time of Sun Pin’s analysis of vulnerable and impregnable targets in his *Military Methods*.⁵¹

The growth of mass infantry armies was also accompanied by the perfection and widespread use of the crossbow during the fourth century B.C.;⁵² by further developments in articulation, deployment, and maneuvering capabilities; and by the reluctant adoption of barbarian practices to create the cavalry.⁵³ Under constant pressure from mounted steppe horsemen, various perceptive commanders and rulers realized the need to develop their own cavalry. Although the history of the horse in China is still emerging, it appears that in 307 B.C. King Wu-ling of North Chao, over vehement objections, deliberately—to facilitate adoption of the cavalry—forced on his troops the “barbarian style of dress” (short jacket and trousers) instead of the indigenous and much-revered long coat of the Chinese. Since the fifth century mounted horsemen had apparently been challenging the Chinese states. The skill of riding probably evolved from Iran and the steppe region, and foreign horses had long been famous in China for their speed and endur-

ance. Wu-ling created the first known cavalry, immediately providing the state with a vastly increased offensive potential.

The saddle, when there was one, was extremely primitive—only a rolled blanket, and stirrups did not appear until the end of the Han. Consequently, the rider was burdened with the task of simultaneously controlling his horse and either shooting his bow or striking with his shock weapon. The effectiveness of the horsemen, acting from such an unstable platform, was inevitably limited and stemmed more from their great speed and mobility than inherent fighting power. However, the development of the cavalry—mentioned only briefly in the military books prior to T’ang T’ai-tsung—freed armies from being confined to open, chariot-accessible terrain and allowed their diffuse deployment in ravines, valleys, forests, hilly fields, and mountains, fully exploiting the terrain.⁵⁴ Supported by vast hordes of armored infantrymen wielding spears, crossbows, and swords (possibly of iron),⁵⁵ warfare on an unprecedented scale suddenly became both possible and inevitable. In the final century of conflict, the third century B.C., which witnessed the growth and decisive triumph of Ch’in, massive campaigns requiring hundreds of thousands of men executing both “explosive” and “persisting” strategies decimated the populace and the countryside. In those days the strategies and methods of the famous tacticians were repeatedly tested and applied and were proven to have a timeless validity.

The State of Wei

The history of Wei, an important participant in the politics of the era, reflects the evolution of military affairs during the Warring States period. Wu Ch’i⁵⁶ became a famous general and military administrator in Wei, whereas both Mencius, the early Confucian standard-bearer, and Wei Liao-tzu, reputed progenitor of the military classic bearing his name, squandered their persuasive skills on King Hui. One of the seven powers in the Warring States period, Wei had become an independent political entity in 434 B.C. when three powerful families carved the large, formerly mighty state of Chin into Wei, Chao, and Han. In 403 B.C. the Chou king recognized the de facto rulers as feudal lords, and in 376 B.C. they completely exterminated the remnants of the Chin ruling house. Situated in the central part of China between the contending powers of Ch’in to the west and Ch’i to the east, Wei was the strongest of the so-called three Chin. Initially, the capital was at An-i, but the fertile plains area in which it was located lacked such natural defenses as mountains and ravines, and the government suffered from constant pressure from hostile neighbors in all directions. When the government was strong

and prosperous, it could retain control over the West Ho region and thus fend off any threat from the belligerent Ch'in; when weak—through the ruler's ineptitude or some disaster—it suffered repeated defeats in the incessant warfare. Furthermore, whereas Ch'in had been successfully stymied by the strength of the great Chin, once the latter was segmented, the successor states—indifferent to mutual cooperation—lacked the power necessary for independent survival.

King Wen, who reigned from the inception of Wei until 387 B.C., realized the need for talented advisers and welcomed worthy men irrespective of their regional origin. Li K'o, one of the outsiders who responded to this policy, was appointed to high office and had great impact. He rewrote the laws, promulgated measures to increase agricultural production, established private property, and fostered a stable commodity-price policy. Hsi-men Pao focused his efforts upon irrigation, thereby greatly increasing the nation's wealth. Wu Ch'i, appointed commanding general, conducted numerous successful campaigns against the Ch'in and secured the defense of the West Ho region. King Wen's son King Wu continued Wu Ch'i's basic policy, thereby compelling the other Chin states of Han and Chao to respect Wei's might and prosperity, although Wu Ch'i was ignominiously forced by court intrigues to flee for his life.

Unfortunately, King Hui—who assumed power in 370 B.C.—was more successful in antagonizing people than in employing them, and he forfeited the services of many talented individuals, such as Lord Shang (who subsequently was instrumental in strengthening Ch'in). Instead of nurturing harmonious relations with his neighbors, he appears to have constantly annoyed them, greatly exacerbating the pressures and conflicts on all sides. Furthermore, he eventually lost the West Ho region, thereby opening the state to incursions by Ch'in, and was forced to move the capital to Ta-liang, thereafter calling the state Liang.

Two famous battles illustrate the nature of warfare in this period. The first, at Kui-ling, stemmed from King Hui's desire to recoup losses suffered at the hands of Ch'in in the west. Wei's army, under the command of P'ang Ch'üan, attacked Chao in the north. Finding itself hard-pressed, Chao requested aid from Ch'i, in the east, on the premise that as Chao presented a natural barrier and defense against Wei, it would be strategically advantageous for Ch'i to support Chao's efforts. Although the Ch'i ruler assented, Sun Pin—the famous strategist whose book has recently been rediscovered—advised waiting for the two antagonists to exhaust themselves, thereby ensuring maximum gain with minimum risk and effort. In 352 B.C., under the command of T'ien Chi, Ch'i mobilized an army to effect an indirect strike at

the Wei homeland, the critical city of Ta-liang, in accord with the principles of "first seize what they love," "attack vacuity," and "strike where undefended." P'ang Ch'üan, flushed with his victories in Chao, reacted as predicted, racing back to mount a counterattack. Ch'i then feigned concern and withdrew to its chosen battlefield to await the Wei army, thereby following a number of basic tactical principles from Sun-tzu and Sun Pin, such as "with ease await the tired." From its fortified positions and high terrain Ch'i was able to quickly defeat the exhausted Wei army, inflicting severe casualties at minimal cost.

Some years later, Wei found itself being increasingly squeezed by a newly vigorous Han, to the south, Ch'in, to the west, Ch'i, to the east, and Chao, to the north. King Hui embarked on a campaign against Han, which had become formidable through the administrative efforts of the famous theorist Shen Pu-hai and by forming an alliance with and returning to Chao the cities previously lost. P'ang Ch'üan, again entrusted with command, struck directly at the Han capital. Han, as Chao had before, sought aid from Ch'i, citing the benefits of mutual defense. Again Sun Pin advised waiting for the forces to decimate each other, further weakening Wei. Han mounted a total defensive effort but lost five major battles in succession and was forced to submit to Ch'in in a desperate effort to survive. Ch'i then sallied forth, following the previous strategy, with Sun Pin as strategist and T'ien Chi in command. P'ang Ch'üan immediately abandoned his campaign in Han, turning back toward his home state. Meanwhile, King Hui mobilized all his resources, placing his son in command of the home-defense troops, with the sole aim of seeking a decisive confrontation with Ch'i.

Under Sun Pin's direction the Ch'i armies, which were advancing into Wei, followed the dictum "be deceptive." P'ang Ch'üan arrogantly believed the men of Ch'i to be cowards who would flee rather than engage mighty Wei in battle. Therefore, Sun Pin daily reduced the number of cooking fires in the encampment to create a facade of ever-increasing desertion. He also effected a tactical withdrawal to further entice P'ang Ch'üan into the favorable terrain at Ma-ling where the Ch'i commander concealed ten thousand crossbowmen among the hills. P'ang Ch'üan, apparently afraid that he would miss an opportunity to inflict a severe blow on the retreating Ch'i army, abandoned his heavy forces and supply train and rushed forth with only light units. Arriving at night, the combined Wei forces were ambushed as soon as they penetrated the killing zone. In addition to being decisively defeated by Ch'i's withering crossbow fire, 100,000 Wei soldiers needlessly perished because of their commander's character flaws and hasty judgment.⁵⁷

Thereafter, Wei not only never regained its former power but also suffered numerous incursions by the now-unchecked mighty Ch'in, which would eventually subjugate all China. In 340 B.C. Wei was forced to cede 700 *li* to Ch'in after sustained defeats, and felt compelled to move its capital to Ta-liang to avoid the incessant danger. Although a strong figure occasionally emerged to effect a temporary resurgence in Wei's strength, its territory continued to shrink until the state, together with the royal house, was finally extinguished in 225 B.C.

The Military Writings

In order to appreciate the great value and inherent importance of the Chinese military classics, one should note several brief historical and political points. First, military works were not normally permitted in private hands, and their possession could be construed as evidence of a conspiracy. (Possession of the T'ai Kung's *Six Secret Teachings*—a book advocating and instructing revolution—would be particularly fatal.) Second, almost all these teachings were at first transmitted down through the generations, often orally and always secretly. Eventually they were recorded—committed to written form on bamboo slips—and sometimes became public knowledge. Government scribes and designated officials gathered the slips for state use, depositing them in imperial libraries, where they were so highly valued that they were exempted from the infamous book burnings of the Ch'in dynasty. Once stored away, they were accessible to a few professors of the classics, a restricted number of high officials, and the emperor himself. Even these privileged individuals might still be denied access to the critical writings, especially if they were related to the imperial family.

Even after the teachings were recorded in manuscript form on bamboo, silk, or eventually paper (after the Han dynasty), patriots sometimes felt compelled to remove them from public domain. General Chang Liang, who played a fundamental role in the overthrow of the tyrannical Ch'in dynasty and in the establishment of the Han, for example, supposedly had the sole copy of the *Three Strategies of Huang Shih-kung*, from which he had personally profited, buried with him in his casket. According to one tradition, however, the text resurfaced when his tomb was vandalized in the fourth century A.D. Another example is the well-known (although perhaps apocryphal) refusal of Li Wei-kung, a famous strategist and effective general, to provide the T'ang emperor with more than defensive knowledge and tactics. In the view of Li Wei-kung, strategies for aggressive action should not be disseminated

because, with the empire already at peace, they could only aid and interest those who wanted to precipitate war and incite revolution.

The seven military books, as they have been traditionally arranged in the *Seven Military Classics* since the Sung dynasty, are

Sun-tzu's Art of War

Wu-tzu

The Methods of the Ssu-ma (Ssu-ma Fa)

Questions and Replies Between T'ang T'ai-tsung and Li Wei-kung

Wei Liao-tzu

Three Strategies of Huang Shih-kung

T'ai Kung's Six Secret Teachings

Although uncertainly abounds regarding the authorship and dates of several of the classics, as well as to what extent they are composite books drawing upon common ground and lost writings, the traditional order unquestionably is not chronological. Sun-tzu's *Art of War* has generally been considered the oldest and greatest extant Chinese military work, even though the purported author of the *Six Secret Teachings*—the T'ai Kung—was active hundreds of years earlier than the (possibly) historical Sun-tzu. Materials preserved in the *Ssu-ma Fa* reputedly extend back into the early Chou; the *Wu-tzu* may have been recorded by Wu Ch'i's disciples, although suffering from later accretions; and the *Three Strategies* probably follows the *Wei Liao-tzu*, yet traditionalists still associate it with the T'ai Kung. Accordingly, one possible order (with many caveats and unstated qualifications) might well be

INITIAL PERIOD	<i>Ssu-ma Fa</i> <i>Art of War</i>
SECOND PERIOD	<i>Wu-tzu</i>
THIRD PERIOD	<i>Wei Liao-tzu</i> <i>Six Secret Teachings</i> <i>Three Strategies</i>
T'ANG-SUNG	<i>Questions and Replies</i>

Biographies of the purported authors, along with summary discussions of the evidence for ascribing dates of composition to particular periods, are found in the introductions to the individual translations. Much of the evi-

dence is tenuous and often circular, and the systematic study of the evolution of strategic thought and military concepts remains to be undertaken. However, the preceding sequence—although possibly infuriating Sun-tzu advocates—seems sustainable in the light of both traditional textual scholarship and recent tomb discoveries. The relative order of books in the third period (which probably coincides with the latter half of the third century B.C.) remains to be defined.⁵⁸ Although we recognize these chronological issues, for purposes of continuity in introducing essential historical material and developments, our order of presentation places the *Six Secret Teachings* first, discussing the T'ai Kung as an active participant in the great Chou drama that would affect and color Chinese history for three millennia. The *Ssu-ma Fa*, which makes frequent references to Chou practices, follows, and then the *Art of War*. The *Wu-tzu*, which might have been composed close to the time of the *Art of War*, completes the early Warring States works. Thereafter, the sequence continues in likely chronological order, with the *Wei Liao-tzu*, the *Three Strategies*, and finally the medieval *Questions and Replies*.

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T'ai Kung's Six Secret Teachings

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Translator's Introduction

THE *Six Secret Teachings* purportedly records the T'ai Kung's political advice and tactical instructions to Kings Wen and Wu of the Chou dynasty in the eleventh century B.C. Although the present book evidently dates from the Warring States period (as is discussed at the end of this introduction), some scholars believe it reflects the tradition of Ch'i military studies¹ and therefore preserves at least vestiges of the oldest strata of Chinese military thought. The historic T'ai Kung, to whom the *Six Secret Teachings* is nominally attributed, has been honored throughout Chinese history to be the first famous general and the progenitor of strategic studies. In the T'ang dynasty he was even accorded his own state temple as the martial patron and thereby attained officially sanctioned status approaching that of Confucius, the revered civil patron.²

A complete work that not only discusses strategy and tactics but also proposes the government measures necessary for forging effective state control and attaining national prosperity, the *Six Secret Teachings* is grounded on—or perhaps projected back into—monumental historical events. The Chou kings presumably implemented many of these policies, thereby enabling them to develop their agricultural and population bases, gradually expand their small border domain, and secure the allegiance of the populace until they could launch the decisive military campaign that defeated the powerful Shang dynasty and overturned its six-hundred-year rule.

The *Six Secret Teachings* is the only military classic written from the perspective of revolutionary activity because the goal of the Chou was nothing less than a dynastic revolution. Attaining this objective required perfecting themselves in the measures and technologies of the time and systematically developing policies, strategies, and even battlefield tactics not previously witnessed in Chinese history. The Chou kings were compelled to ponder employing limited resources and restricted forces to attack a vastly superior, well-entrenched foe whose campaign armies alone probably outnumbered the entire Chou population. In contrast, many of the other strategic writings

focus on managing military confrontations between states of comparable strength, with both sides starting from relatively similar military and government infrastructures. Furthermore, although nearly all the military texts adhere to the basic concept of "enriching the state (through agriculture) and strengthening the army," many tend to emphasize strategic analysis and battlefield tactics rather than the fundamental measures necessary to create even the possibility of confrontation.³

The epoch-making clash between the Chou and Shang dynasties, as envisioned by the Chou and idealistically portrayed in later historical writings, set the moral tone and established the parameters for the dynastic cycle concept. The archetypal battle of virtue and evil—the benevolent and righteous acting on behalf of all the people against a tyrant and his coterie of parasitic supporters—had its origin with this conflict. The Shang's earlier conquest of the Hsia, although portrayed as having been similarly conceived, occurred before the advent of written language and was only a legend even in antiquity. However, the Chou's determined effort to free the realm from the yoke of suffering and establish a rule of Virtue and benevolence became the inspirational essence of China's moral self-perception. As dynasties decayed and rulers became morally corrupt and increasingly ineffectual, new champions of righteousness appeared who confronted the oppressive forces of government, rescued the people from imminent doom, and returned the state to benevolent policies. Moreover, in the view of some historians, the Shang-Chou conflict marked the last battle between different peoples because starting with the Chou dynasty, military engagements within China were essentially internal political clashes.⁴ However, confrontations between inhabitants of the agrarian central states and the nomadic steppe peoples continued throughout Chinese history, reflecting in part the self-conscious identity emphasized by the people of the central states in contrast with their "barbarian" neighbors.

As portrayed in such historical writings as the *Shih chi*,⁵ and in accord with good moral tradition and the plight of the people, the Shang had ascended to power by overthrowing the last evil ruler of the previous dynasty—the Hsia.⁶ After generations of rule, the Shang emperors—due perhaps to their splendid isolation and constant indulgence in myriad pleasures—are believed to have become less virtuous and less capable.⁷ Their moral decline continued inexorably until the final ruler, who history has depicted as evil incarnate. The many perversities attributed to him included imposing heavy taxes; forcing the people to perform onerous labor services, mainly to provide him with lavish palaces and pleasure centers; interfering with agricultural practices, thereby causing widespread hunger and depriva-

tion; indulging in debauchery, including drunkenness, orgies, and violence; brutally murdering innumerable people, especially famous men of virtue and loyal court officials; and developing and inflicting inhuman punishments. However, as the following brief excerpt from the Shang Annals in the *Shih chi* records, the king was also talented, powerful, and fearsome:

In natural ability and discrimination Emperor Chou was acute and quick; his hearing and sight were extremely sensitive; and his physical skills and strength surpassed other men. His hands could slay a fierce animal; his knowledge was sufficient to ward off criticism; and his verbal skills [were] sufficient to adorn his errors. He boasted to his ministers about his own ability; he was haughty to all the realm with his reputation; and [he] believed that all were below him. He loved wine, debauched himself in music, and was enamored of his consorts. He loved Ta Chi, and followed her words.⁸ Thus he had Shih Chüan create new licentious sounds, the Pei-li dance [of licentious women], and the [lewd] music of "fluttering down." He made the taxes heavier in order to fill the Deer Tower with coins, and stuffed the Chü-ch'iao storehouses with grain. He increased his collections of dogs, horses, and unusual objects, overflowing the palace buildings. He expanded the Sha-ch'iu garden tower, and had a multitude of wild animals and flying birds brought there. He was disrespectful to ghosts and spirits. He assembled numerous musicians and actors at the Sha-ch'iu garden; [he] made a lake of wine and a forest of hanging meat, and had naked men and women pursue each other in them, conducting a drinking feast throughout the night. The hundred surnames looked toward him with hatred, and some of the feudal lords revolted.⁹

According to traditional sources, the Chou state was dramatically established when Tan Fu, the Chou leader, emigrated over the mountains south into the Wei River valley to avoid endangering his people and subsequently abandoned so-called barbarian customs to embrace the agricultural destiny of his ancestors. These actions immediately characterized him as a paragon of Virtue and endowed the Chou—and subsequently China—with a sedentary, agrarian character. The *Shi chi* records it as follows:

The Ancient Duke, Tan Fu, again cultivated the [agricultural] occupation of Hou Chi¹⁰ and Duke Liu, accumulated his Virtue and practiced righteousness, and the people of the state all supported him. The Hsün-yü of the Jung and Ti [barbarians] attacked them, wanting to get their wealth and things, so he gave them to them. After that they again attacked, wanting to take the land and people. The people were all angry and wanted to fight. The Ancient Duke said, "When people establish a ruler, it should be to their advantage. Now the barbarians are attacking and waging war because they want my land and people. What difference is there if the people are with them, or with me? The people want to fight because of me, but to slay people's fathers and sons in order to rule them, I

cannot bear to do it." Then, with his relatives, he went to Pin, forded the Ch'i River, the Chü River, crossed over Mt. Liang, and stopped below Mt. Ch'i. The people of Pin, supporting their aged and carrying their weak, again all flocked to the Ancient Duke below Mt. Ch'i. When the nearby states heard of the Ancient Duke's benevolence, many also gave their allegiance. Thereupon the Ancient Duke discarded their barbarian customs, constructed walls and buildings, and established cities to have them dwell separately. He set up officials for the five offices. The people all sang songs and took pleasure in it, praising his Virtue.¹¹

General Hsü Pei-ken, a twentieth-century Chinese military historian, believes the Chou easily managed to develop alliances with various peoples—including disenchanted Hsia groups conquered by the Shang—because of their agricultural heritage and specialization. In perpetuating the Hsia's agricultural offices, for many years the Chou had dispatched advisers to instruct other peoples and states in farming practices and seasonal activities. This not only garnered them respect and goodwill but also gave them an opportunity to gain a thorough knowledge of the inhabitants, customs, and terrain outside the Wei River valley.¹²

However, Chi Li—Tan Fu's third son and heir through the virtuous deference of his two elder brothers—aggressively waged successful campaigns against neighboring peoples and rapidly expanded the Chou's power base. At first the Shang recognized his achievements and sanctioned his actions, granting him the title of earl, but he was eventually imprisoned and died at Shang hands despite having married into their royal house. Although the history of Shang-Chou relations remains somewhat unclear, awaiting further archaeological discoveries, several other members of the Chou royal house—including King Wen—seem to have married Shang princesses. Generations before the Chou had migrated into the Wei River valley, commencing with King Wu Ting, the Shang had conducted several military expeditions to subjugate the Chou. Shang kings had also frequently hunted in the Chou domain but apparently grew apprehensive and abandoned this practice as Chou's might increased.¹³

In his old age, King Wen was also imprisoned by the tyrannical Shang ruler for his loyal remonstrance, but he gained his freedom through lavish bribes gathered by his family and other virtuous men.¹⁴ The gifts presented were so generous and impressive that King Wen, who continued to profess his submission and fealty to the Shang, was even designated the Western Duke, or Lord of the West. When the title was conferred, he was presented with a bow, arrows, and axes—symbols of the attendant military responsibilities that ironically required that he actively protect the empire from exter-

nal challenges. He immediately returned to his small state on the western fringe of the Shang empire where the remoteness of the Wei River valley proved immensely advantageous. Dwelling in essentially barbarian territory, the people enjoyed the stimulus of vigorous military activity,¹⁵ the harvests of a fertile area, and the secrecy relative isolation allowed. Because King Wen could implement effective policies to foster the state's material and social strength without attracting undue attention, Chou had the luxury of seventeen years to prepare for the ultimate confrontation.¹⁶

The T'ai Kung

Into this state of Chou—insignificant when compared with the strength and expanse of the mighty Shang, which continued to assert at least nominal control over roughly three thousand small states and fiefs—came the eccentric T'ai Kung, whose personal name was Chiang Shang. An elderly, somewhat mysterious figure whose early life was shrouded in secrecy, he had perhaps found the Shang ruler insufferable and feigned madness to escape court life and the ruler's power. He disappeared, only to resurface in the Chou countryside at the apocryphal age of seventy-two and become instrumental in Chou affairs. After faithfully serving the Chou court for approximately twenty years subsequent to his first encounter with King Wen, the T'ai Kung was enfeoffed as king of Ch'i following the great conquest—as much to stabilize the eastern area (and perhaps remove him as a military threat) as to reward him for his efforts.

Apart from the T'ai Kung's storied longevity, the initial interview between him and King Wen is also marked by the mythic aura that frequently characterizes predestined meetings between great historical figures. As recorded in the *Six Secret Teachings*, the Grand Historian had noted signs portending the appearance of a great Worthy and accordingly informed King Wen. The king therefore observed a vegetarian fast for three days to morally prepare for the meeting and to attain the proper spiritual state of mind. When he finally encountered him, the T'ai Kung quickly broached the ultimate subject of revolution—of overthrowing the Shang—by responding to the king's inquiry about fishing in allegorical terms. He then abandoned metaphors to openly advise the king that the realm—indeed, the entire world—could be taken with the proper humanitarian measures and an effective government. Surprised by his directness, although probably assuming it was the working of Heaven, the king immediately acknowledged the T'ai Kung as the true Sage who was critical to realizing Chou dreams and resolved to overthrow the Shang dynasty. Thereafter, the T'ai Kung served as adviser, teacher, confi-

dant, Sage, military strategist, and possibly commander-in-chief of the armed forces to kings Wen and Wu over the many years necessary before final victory could be realized.

The *Shih chi* chapter on the state of Ch'i contains a biography of its founder, the T'ai Kung, that provides additional information and records the developments that led to the famous interview (which purportedly is preserved in Chapter One of the *Six Secret Teachings*).

T'ai Kung Wang, Lü Shang, was a native of the Eastern Sea area.¹⁷ His ancestor once served as a labor director, and in assisting Yü in pacifying the waters, had merit. In the interval between Emperor Shun and the Hsia dynasty he was enfeoffed at Lü, or perhaps at Shen, and surnamed Chiang. During the Hsia and Shang dynasties some of the sons and grandsons of the collateral lines were enfeoffed at Lü and Shen, some were commoners, and Shang was their descendant. His original surname was Chiang, but he was [subsequently] surnamed from his fief, so was called Lü Shang.

Lü Shang, impoverished and in straits, was already old when, through fishing, he sought out the Lord of the West [King Wen].¹⁸ The Lord of the West was about to go hunting, and divined about [the prospects]. What [the diviner] said was: "What you will obtain will be neither dragon nor serpent, neither tiger nor bear. What you will obtain is an assistant for a hegemon¹⁹ or king." Thereupon the Lord of the West went hunting, and indeed met the T'ai Kung on the sunny side of the Wei River. After speaking with him he was greatly pleased and said, "My former lord, the T'ai Kung, said 'There should be a Sage who will come to Chou, and Chou will thereby flourish.' Are you truly this [one] or not? My T'ai Kung looked out [*wang*] for you for a long time." Thus he called him T'ai Kung Wang,²⁰ and returned together with him in the carriage, establishing him as strategist.²¹

Someone said, "The T'ai Kung has extensive learning, and once served King Chou [of the Shang]. King Chou lacked the Way [Tao], so he left him. He traveled about exercising his persuasion on the various feudal lords,²² but didn't encounter anyone [suitable], and in the end returned west with the Lord of the West."

Someone else said, "Lü Shang was a retired scholar who had hidden himself on the seacoast.²³ When the Lord of the West was confined at Yu-li, San-i Sheng and Hung Yao, having long known him, summoned Lü Shang. Lü Shang also said, 'I have heard that the Lord of the West is a Worthy, and moreover excels at nurturing the old, so I guess I'll go there.' The three men sought out beautiful women and unusual objects on behalf of the Lord of the West, and presented them to King Chou in order to ransom the Lord of the West. The Lord of the West was thereby able to go out and return to his state."

Although the ways they say Lü Shang came to serve the Lord of the West differ, still the essential point is that he became strategist to Kings Wen and Wu.

After the Lord of the West was extricated from Yu-li and returned [to Chou], he secretly planned with Lü Shang and cultivated his Virtue in order to overturn Shang's government. The T'ai Kung's affairs were mostly concerned with military authority and unorthodox stratagems,²⁴ so when later generations speak about armies and the Chou's secret balance of power [*ch'üan*],²⁵ they all honor the T'ai Kung for making the fundamental plans.

The Lord of the West's government was equitable, [even] extending to settling the conflict between the Yü and Jui. The poet [in the *Book of Odes*] refers to the Lord of the West as King Wen after he received the Mandate [of Heaven]. He attacked Ch'ung, Mi-hsü, and Chüan-i,²⁶ and constructed a great city at Feng. If All under Heaven were divided into thirds, two-thirds had [already] given their allegiance to the Chou.²⁷ The T'ai Kung's plans and schemes occupied the major part.

When King Wen died, King Wu ascended the throne. In the ninth year, wanting to continue King Wen's task, he mounted an attack in the east to observe whether the feudal lords would assemble or not. When the army set out, the T'ai Kung wielded the yellow battle ax in his left hand, and grasped the white pennon in his right, in order to swear the oath.

*Ts'ang-ssu! Ts'ang-ssu!*²⁸

*Unite your masses of common people
with your boats and oars.*

Those who arrive after will be beheaded.

Thereafter he went to Meng-chin. The number of feudal lords who assembled of their own accord was eight hundred. The feudal lords all said, "King Chou can be attacked." King Wu said, "They cannot yet." He returned the army and made the Great Oath with the T'ai Kung.²⁹

After they had remained in Chou for two years, King Chou killed prince Pi-kan and imprisoned Chi-tzu. King Wu, wanting to attack King Chou, performed divination with the tortoise shell to observe the signs. They were not auspicious, and violent wind and rain arose. The assembled Dukes were all afraid, but the T'ai Kung stiffened them to support King Wu.³⁰ King Wu then went forth.

In the eleventh year, the first month, on the day *chia-tzu* he swore the oath at Mu-yeh and attacked King Chou of the Shang. King Chou's army was completely defeated. King Chou turned and ran off, mounting the Deer Tower. They then pursued and beheaded King Chou.³¹ On the morrow King Wu was established at the altars: The Dukes presented clear water; K'ang Shu-feng of Wei spread out a variegated mat; the Shih Shang-fu [the T'ai Kung] led the sacrificial animals; and the Scribe I chanted the prayers, in order to announce to the spirits the punishment of King Chou's offenses. They distributed the money from the Deer Tower, and gave out grain from the Chü-ch'iao granary, in order to relieve the impoverished people. They enfeoffed Pi-kan's grave, and released Chi-tzu

from imprisonment. They moved the nine cauldrons,³² rectified the government of Chou, and began anew with All under Heaven. The Shih Shang-fu's [T'ai Kung's] plans occupied the major part.³³

Thereupon King Wu, having already pacified the Shang and become King of All under Heaven, enfeoffed the T'ai Kung at Ying-ch'iu in Ch'i. The T'ai Kung went east to go to his state, staying overnight on the road and traveling slowly. The innkeeper said, "I have heard it said that time is hard to get but easy to lose. Our guest sleeps extremely peacefully. Probably he isn't going to return to his state." The T'ai Kung, overhearing it, got dressed that night and set out, reaching his state just before first light. The Marquis of Lai came out to attack, and fought with him for Ying-ch'iu. Ying-ch'iu bordered Lai. The people of Lai were Yi people who, taking advantage of the chaos under King Chou and the new settlement of the Chou dynasty, assumed Chou would not be able to assemble the distant quarters. For this reason they battled with the T'ai Kung for his state.

When the T'ai Kung reached his state he rectified the government in accord with their customs³⁴; simplified the Chou's forms of propriety [*li*]; opened up the occupations of the merchants and artisans; and facilitated the realization of profits from fishing and salt. In large numbers the people turned their allegiance to Ch'i, and Ch'i became a great state.³⁵

Then when King Ch'eng of the Chou was young,³⁶ Kuan Shu and Ts'ai Shu revolted, and the Yi people of the Hua River valley turned against the Chou. So [King Ch'eng] had Duke Chao K'ang issue a mandate to the T'ai Kung: "To the east as far as the sea, the west to the Yellow River, south to Mu-ling, and north to Wu-ti, completely rectify and put in order the five marquis and nine earls."³⁷ From this Ch'i was able to conduct a campaign of rectification and attack [the rebellious], and became a great state. Its capital was Ying-ch'iu.

When the T'ai Kung died he was probably more than a hundred years old. ...

The Grand Historian says: "I went to Ch'i—from Lang-yeh which belongs to Mt. T'ai, north to where it fronts the sea, two thousand *li* of fertile land. Its people are expansive,³⁸ and many conceal their knowledge. It's their Heaven-given nature. Taking the T'ai Kung's Sageness in establishing his state, isn't it appropriate that Duke Huan flourished and cultivated good government, and was thereby able to assemble the feudal lords in a covenant. Vast, vast, truly the style of a great state!"³⁹

Despite this detailed biography of the T'ai Kung in Ssu-ma Ch'ien's generally reliable *Shih chi*, over the millennia Confucian skeptics even denied his very existence. Others, perturbed by the confusing traditions regarding his origin, consigned him to a minor role. Both groups justified their views by citing the absence of references to the T'ai Kung in the traditionally accepted archaic texts that supposedly provide an authentic record of these epoch-

making events—the *Shang shu*⁴⁰ and *Ch'un ch'iu* [*Spring and Autumn Annals*.] Thus, skeptics generally appear to follow the thinking of the second great Confucian, the pedantic Mencius, in refusing to accept the brutal nature of military campaigns and the inevitable bloodshed.⁴¹ King Wu's herculean efforts over the many years prior to the conquest, and his achievements in imposing rudimentary Chou control over the vast Shang domain also tend to be slighted. Consequently, the two figures historically associated with sagacity, virtue, and the civil—King Wen and the Duke of Chou—are revered while the strategist and final commander, the representatives of the martial, are ignored and dismissed. However, after examining numerous stories and references in disparate texts and winnowing away the legendary and mythic material, other scholars and historians have concluded that the T'ai Kung not only existed but also played a prominent role in Chou history—much as described in the *Shih chi* biography.⁴² Although the details of his initial encounter with King Wen seem likely to remain unknown, the T'ai Kung was probably a representative of the Chiang clan with whom the Chou were militarily allied and had intermarried for generations.⁴³ No doubt, as with the Hsia dynasty, whose formerly mythic existence assumes concrete dimensions with the ongoing discovery of ancient artifacts, the T'ai Kung will eventually be vindicated by historical evidence.⁴⁴

Policies and Strategies of the T'ai Kung

In order to realize their objectives of surviving and then conquering, the Chou needed a grand strategy to develop a substantial material base, undermine the enemy's strength, and create an administrative organization that could be imposed effectively in both peace and war. Accordingly, in the *Six Secret Teachings* the T'ai Kung is a strong proponent of the doctrine of the benevolent ruler, with its consequent administrative emphasis on the people's welfare. He advocates this fundamental policy because he believes a well-ordered, prosperous, satisfied people will both physically and emotionally support their government. Only a society with sufficient material resources is able to train and instruct its people,⁴⁵ to generate the spirit and provide the supplies essential to military campaigns, and to establish the environment necessary to furnish truly motivated soldiers. Moreover, a benevolent government immediately becomes an attractive beacon to the oppressed and dispirited, to refugees, and to other states that are under the yoke of despotic powers. It creates the confidence that if a new regime is established, its rulers will not duplicate the errors of recently deposed evil monarchs.

The T'ai Kung's basic principles, general policies, and strategic concepts as expressed in the *Six Secret Teachings* are briefly summarized as follows.⁴⁶

Civil Affairs

Profit the People The T'ai Kung strongly advocates policies similar to Mencius's historically significant emphasis on the welfare and condition of the people. Stimulating agriculture must be primary and should encompass positive measures to increase productivity as well as conscious efforts to avoid interfering with the agricultural seasons, thus minimizing the negative impact of government actions. Virtues can only be inculcated in and demands successfully imposed on the populace if an adequate material base exists. A prosperous, well-governed state inhabited by a contented people will inevitably be respected by other powers.⁴⁷

Institute a Strong Bureaucracy and Impose Controls Although government must be founded on moral standards and should assiduously practice virtue, it can only govern effectively by creating and systematically imposing a system of rewards and punishments. These policies must invariably be implemented by a strong bureaucracy composed of talented men selected carefully after insightful evaluation. Values inimical to the state, such as private standards of courage, should be discouraged. However, tolerance must be extended to allies and efforts made to avoid violating their local customs.

Rewards and punishments must be clear, immediate, and universal so they will become part of the national consciousness. Although laws and punishments should be restrained and never multiplied, those necessary to the state's survival should be rigorously enforced. Punishments should extend to the very highest ranks and rewards to the lowest.⁴⁸ Only then will they prove effective and will people be motivated to observe them regardless of their positions and of whether their potential transgressions might be detectable.

Personal Example and Sympathy of the Ruler The ruler, and by implication all the members of government, should intensively cultivate the universally acknowledged virtues: benevolence, righteousness, loyalty, credibility, sincerity, courage, and wisdom. Because all men love profits, pleasure, and virtue and detest death, suffering, and evil, the ruler should develop and foster these in common with the people. Ideally, he must perceive their needs and desires and avail himself of every possible source of information to understand their condition. Personal emotions should never be allowed to interfere with the impartial administration of government, nor should the ruler's pleasures or those of the bureaucracy become excessive, thereby

impoverishing the people and depriving them of their livelihood. The ruler should strive to eliminate every vestige of evil in order to forge a persona that contrasts dramatically with an enemy's perversity, vividly presenting the people diametrically opposed alternatives. Righteousness must always dominate personal emotions and desires, and the ruler should actively share both hardship and pleasure with his people and also project an image of doing so. This will bind the people to him and guarantee their allegiance to the state.

Total Warfare One reason the *Six Secret Teachings* was excoriated over the centuries is because the T'ai Kung insisted on utilizing every available method to achieve victory, as did the historical figure—as conventionally portrayed—in the Chou effort to conquer the Shang. Important measures include always anticipating the possibility of hostilities by consciously planning to employ the normal means of production for warfare⁴⁹; feigning and dissembling to deceive the enemy and allay suspicions; using bribes, gifts, and other methods to induce disloyalty among enemy officials and to cause chaos and consternation in their ranks; and further increasing the enemy's profligacy and debilitation by furnishing the tools for self-destruction—such as music, wine, women, and fascinating rarities (jade carvings and the like). Complete secrecy is mandated, and when the battle is joined, constraints should not be imposed.⁵⁰

Military Affairs

Much of the book is devoted to detailed tactics for particular situations. However, the T'ai Kung also gave advice on many topics, including campaign strategy, the selection of generals and officers, training, preparation and types of weapons, creation of new weapons, communications, battle tactics, and organization. Many of his observations and strategies are obsolete, but others have enduring value. Articulation, segmentation and control, independent action, and specialized weapons systems and their forces are discussed extensively. The following particularly merit summary introduction.

The General The general must be carefully selected and should be properly invested in his role as commander-in-chief with a formal ceremony at the state altars, after which he is entrusted with absolute authority over all military matters. Once he has assumed command, the ruler cannot interfere with the general's actions or decisions, primarily because valuable opportunities might be lost or actions forced that endanger the army, but also to prevent

any officers from questioning the general's authority by presuming on their familiarity with the king.⁵¹

Generals and commanders should embody critical characteristics in balanced combinations to qualify them for leadership and be free of traits that might either lead to judgmental errors or be exploitable and thereby doom their forces. Several chapters enumerate these essential aspects of character and their correlated flaws and suggest psychological techniques for evaluating and selecting military leaders.⁵²

Organization and Unity Both the military and civilian spheres must be marked by unity and thorough integration if they are to be effective. Individual sections must be assigned single tasks, and an integrated system of reporting and responsibility should be implemented. A command hierarchy must be created and imposed, with a full staff of general officers and technical and administrative specialists.⁵³

Battle Tactics The T'ai Kung analyzes numerous battle situations and formulates some general principles to guide the commander's actions and his efforts to determine appropriate tactics based on objective classifications of terrain, aspects of the enemy, and relative strength of the confrontational forces.⁵⁴ There are two basic categories: one in which the army is about to engage an enemy, and one in which it suddenly finds itself at a disadvantage in a forced encounter. The topics covered include selection of advantageous terrain, assault methods against fortifications,⁵⁵ night attacks, counterattacks, escape from entrapment, forest warfare, water conflict, mountain fighting, valley defense, survival under fire attack, situations and topography to avoid, techniques for psychological warfare, probing and manipulating the enemy, ways to induce fear, and methods for deception.

Despite the passage of millennia, certain prominent principles, strategies, and tactics from the *Six Secret Teachings* retain validity and continue to be employed in both the military and business spheres. Clearly, the most important of these are deception and surprise.⁵⁶ To maximize an attack's effectiveness, unorthodox measures should be implemented to manipulate the enemy psychologically and physically. Several techniques are possible, but among the most effective are false attacks, feints, and limited encounters designed to constantly harry deployed forces. Following these the main attack can be launched, taking advantage of the enemy's surprise and its expectation that the attack is merely another ruse.

Additional tactics include inciting confusion in the enemy's ranks, through such tactics as disinformation, then taking advantage of the ensuing

chaos; overawing the enemy through massive displays of force; being aggressive and never yielding the initiative; stressing speed and swiftness; availing oneself of climatic and terrain conditions that trouble and annoy the enemy, such as rain and wind; attacking from out of the sun or at sunset; and mounting intensive efforts to gather intelligence. The enemy must be evaluated and judgments properly rendered before a decision to attack or defend can be made. Weaknesses in the opposing general should be fully exploited, and assaults should be directed toward the enemy's undefended positions. Traps and ambushes need to be avoided but should always be deployed when in difficulty. Forces should normally be consolidated for effective concentration of power rather than dispersed and weakened. Those who surrender should be spared to encourage the enemy to abandon its resistance. The troops should be mobile, and their specializations should be fully utilized. No general should ever suffer a defeat from lack of training or preparation.

Date and Authorship of the Text

The historic T'ai Kung's relationship to the *Six Secret Teachings* remains somewhat controversial and is marked by widely differing opinions. The present Chinese title, *T'ai Kung Liu-t'ao*, first appeared in the "Treatise on Literature" incorporated into the *Sui shu*—the history of the short-lived Sui dynasty written in the T'ang era. Prior to this, both Liu Pei and the great general Chu-ko Liang are noted by a *San-kuo chih* commentator as having high regard for a book entitled *Liu-t'ao*.⁵⁷ Yen Shih-ku, the famous exegete (perhaps erroneously) identified this work with another, similarly titled book extant in the Han dynasty that was thought to be a Chou dynasty historical work.⁵⁸

The meaning of the title is not completely clear; however, the first character, *liu*, incontrovertibly means "six." The second character, *t'ao*, has the primary meaning of a "wrap," or "cover"; within a military context it meant the cloth wrapped around a bow or perhaps a bowcase used to carry it.⁵⁹ By extension it means "to conceal" or "to secret," and by implication it probably came to refer to the skills involved in using a bow in warfare and thus in military arts in general.⁶⁰ Thus, the *Liu-t'ao* should be understood as a book containing six categorical discussions about the skills and tactics of warfare. The title has occasionally been translated as the *Six Cases*. However, we have opted to emphasize the aspect of wrapping things and thereby keeping them secret together with the putative author's role in teaching and advising and have chosen the title *Secret Teachings*.

Members of the Confucian school, including a number of prominent Sung dynasty scholars, disparaged the *Six Secret Teachings* as a forgery of the Warring States period, during which the other military writings were developed.⁶¹ Thereafter, other pedants attributed it to the T'ang dynasty, vociferously denying it any claim to antiquity. Their main criticism focused on the realistic nature of the work and the "despicable policies" the T'ai Kung clearly advocates. As mentioned in the preceding discussion of the T'ai Kung's historicity, they dogmatically insisted that true Sages, such as the founders of the Chou dynasty and the T'ai Kung, would not debase themselves or be compelled to use artifice, deception, sex, and bribes to achieve their ends. Therefore, from their narrow perspective, the conquest of the Shang can only be understood as the victory of culture and Virtue over barbarism and perversity.⁶² Unfortunately, these pedants have systematically ignored the ancient emphasis on both the civil and the martial and thereby overlooked the decisive nature of the final battle and the conditions preceding it wherein after an extensive forced march, the vastly outnumbered Chou army decimated the Shang forces. (A few professional soldiers have contradicted the pedants, emphasizing that the realistic character of the Chou's military activities and their total commitment to employing every means possible to vanquish the evil and preserve the populace should be construed as a clear and certain attestation to the validity of the text.)

Some traditionalists, especially historians with career military service backgrounds, are apparently anxious to uphold the authenticity of the work and still claim that it dates from the founding of the Chou dynasty.⁶³ Others with more moderate viewpoints believe the core teachings could have been preserved in terse form on bamboo and been transmitted orally by the T'ai Kung's descendants in the state of Ch'i, becoming the foundation for Ch'i military studies. They acknowledge that over the centuries the original discussions probably suffered numerous accretions and losses, as is the case with *Chuang-tzu* and *Han Fei-tzu*, which were finally compiled and revised late in the Warring States period.⁶⁴

The confident assertions that the entire work is a T'ang forgery were dramatically destroyed with the discovery of a virtually identical, although only partial, bamboo slip edition in a Han dynasty tomb in the early 1970s.⁶⁵ Combined with other Han historical references, this finding proves that portions of the text assumed their present form by at least the early Han era and has been cited by proponents of the T'ai Kung's essential connection with the book as evidence for their position. However, even those advocates who staunchly believe a prototype text underlies the current *Six Secret Teachings* are compelled to acknowledge several historical anachronisms. The lan-

guage and style of writing indicate extensive revisions, and the final commitment to written form could not have occurred before perhaps the fourth century B.C.⁶⁶ The frequent mention of advanced weapons, such as the crossbow and sword,⁶⁷ and entire chapters devoted to cavalry tactics prove that the penultimate author lived seven to eight hundred years later than the T'ai Kung. For example, Chapter 55, "Equivalent Forces," discusses the relative effectiveness of chariots, cavalrymen, and infantrymen even though the infantry did not become significant for centuries and the cavalry only emerged in the third century B.C.

Several scholars have asserted that the *Six Secret Teachings* extensively quotes passages and borrows concepts from the other military classics, such as Sun-tzu's *Art of War*.⁶⁸ However, questions of priority must always be considered subjects for debate. The *Art of War* may in fact be terse and abstract because Sun-tzu benefited from this tradition of military thought and, as with the authors of such other works as the *Wei Liao-tzu*, availed himself of concepts from the embryonic text of the *Six Secret Teachings* and assiduously assimilated common sayings.⁶⁹ In the Warring States period, thorough familiarity with all extant military thought would have been essential if states and commanders were to survive. Therefore, the absence of both conceptual and textual borrowing would probably be more remarkable than the presence thereof because it would indicate highly segmented and strictly preserved schools of tactics and secret strategy.

One final viewpoint regarding the text's transmission holds that the famous military writing given to Chang Liang in the turbulent years preceding the Han dynasty's founding was the *Six Secret Teachings* rather than the *Three Strategies of Huang Shih-kung*.⁷⁰ This book would be particularly appropriate because of its historical echoes: Its readers were committed to the populist overthrow of another brutal, oppressive ruling house—the Ch'in. Accordingly, it has been suggested that the book was actually composed by a military expert in the third century B.C. when the Ch'in were relentlessly destroying their enemies and consolidating their power.⁷¹ This would explain the mature development of concepts and strategies, the extensive knowledge of weapons and defensive equipment, the emphasis on benevolent government, and the efforts to preserve the book's secrecy.

The Six T'ao

Most commentators characterize the first two Secret Teachings as focusing on grand strategy and planning for war and the last four as falling within the category of tactical studies.⁷² However, because either the original authors of

the *Six Secret Teachings* failed to provide any explanations for their apparently thematic groupings or such prefatory material has been lost, it is difficult to perceive any intrinsic connection between titles such as “dragon” and the contents of the section. Only the first two Secret Teachings, the Civil and the Martial, which focus on the two foundations for conducting warfare—an economically sound, well-administered state with a motivated populace, and a strong army—have contents that justify their titles. Although a few attempts have been made to discern thematic issues underlying the six individual classifications, such distinctions often appear inadequate to support assigning a particular chapter to one Teaching or another without knowledge of the extant work.

Although the Table of Contents for this section provides a general indication of each Teaching's topics and the translator's introduction surveys the main subjects in some detail, a brief characterization of the individual Teachings may still be useful.

Civil T'ao

Moral, effective government is the basis for survival and the foundation for warfare. The state must thrive economically while limiting expenditures, foster appropriate values and behavior among the populace, implement rewards and punishments, employ the worthy, and refrain from disturbing or harming the people.⁷³

Martial T'ao

The Martial Secret Teaching continues the Civil T'ao's discussion of political, rather than military, measures. It begins with the T'ai Kung's analysis of the contemporary political world and his assessment of the Chou's prospects for successfully revolting against the Shang if their avowed objective is to save the world from tyranny and suffering. Attracting the disaffected weakens the enemy and strengthens the state; employing subterfuge and psychological techniques allows manipulation of the enemy and hastens its demise. The ruler must visibly cultivate his Virtue and embrace government policies that will allow the state to compete for the minds and hearts of the people; the state will thus gain victory without engaging in battle.⁷⁴

Dragon T'ao

The Dragon Secret Teaching focuses primarily on military organization, including the specialized responsibilities of the command staff, the characteristics and qualifications of generals and methods for their evaluation and selection, the ceremony appropriate for commissioning a commanding general

to ensure that his independence and awesomeness are established, the importance of rewards and punishments in creating and maintaining the general's awesomeness and authority, and essential behavior if the general is to truly command in person and foster allegiance and unity in his troops. Secondary issues concern military communications and the paramount need for secrecy; evaluation of the situation and how to act decisively when the moment arrives; an understanding of basic tactical principles, including flexibility and the unorthodox, and avoiding the common errors of command; various cues for fathoming the enemy's situation; and the everyday basis for military skills and equipment.

Tiger T'ao

The Tiger Secret Teaching opens with a discussion of the important categories of military equipment and weapons, then continues with widely ranging expositions on tactical principles and essential issues of command. Although types of deployment are considered briefly, and the necessary preparation of amphibious equipment is addressed, most of the chapters provide tactics for extricating oneself from adverse battlefield situations. The solutions generally emphasize speed, maneuverability, unified action, decisive commitment, the employment of misdirection, the establishment of ambushes, and the appropriate use of different types of forces.

Leopard T'ao

The Leopard Secret Teaching emphasizes tactical solutions for particularly difficult types of terrain, such as forests, mountains, ravines and defiles, lakes and rivers, deep valleys, and other constricted locations. It also contains discussions of methods to contain rampaging invaders, confront superior forces, deploy effectively, and act explosively.

Canine T'ao

The most important chapters in the Canine Secret Teaching expound on detailed principles for appropriately employing the three component forces—chariots, infantry, and cavalry—in a wide variety of concrete tactical situations and discuss their comparative battlefield effectiveness. Another section describes deficiencies and weaknesses in the enemy that can and should be exploited immediately with a determined attack. Finally, several chapters address general issues that seem more appropriate to the Dragon Secret Teaching: the identification and selection of highly motivated, physically talented individuals for elite infantry units and for the cavalry and chariots; and methods for training the soldiers.

文韜

I

CIVIL SECRET TEACHING

1. King Wen's Teacher

King Wen intended to go hunting, so Pien, the Scribe, performed divination to inquire about his prospects. The Scribe reported: "While hunting on the north bank of the Wei river you will get a great catch. It will not be any form of dragon, nor a tiger or great bear. According to the signs, you will find a duke or marquis there whom Heaven has sent to be your teacher. If employed as your assistant, you will flourish and the benefits will extend to three generations of Chou kings."

King Wen asked: "Do the signs truly signify this?"

The Scribe Pien replied: "My Supreme Ancestor, the Scribe Ch'ou, when performing divination for the Sage Emperor Shun,¹ obtained comparable indications. Emperor Shun then found Kao-yao to assist him."

King Wen then observed a vegetarian regime for three days to purify himself, then mounted his hunting chariot. Driving his hunting horses, he went out to hunt on the northern bank of the Wei river. Finally he saw the T'ai Kung sitting on a grass mat fishing. King Wen greeted him courteously and then asked: "Do you take pleasure in fishing?"

The T'ai Kung replied: "The True Man of Worth² takes pleasure in attaining his ambitions; the common man takes pleasure in succeeding in his [ordinary] affairs. Now my fishing is very much like this."

"What do you mean it is like it?" inquired the king.

The T'ai Kung responded: "In fishing there are three forms of authority:³ the ranks of salary, death, and offices. Fishing is the means to obtain what you seek. Its nature is deep, and from it much greater principles can be discerned."

King Wen said: "I would like to hear about its nature."

The T'ai Kung elaborated: "When the source is deep, the water flows actively. When the water flows actively, fish spawn there. This is nature. When

the roots are deep, the tree is tall. When the tree is tall, fruit is produced. This is nature. When True Men of Worth have sympathies and views in common, they will be drawn together. When they are drawn together affairs arise.⁴ This is nature.

"Speech and response are the adornment of inner emotions. Speaking about true nature is the pinnacle of affairs. Now if I speak about true nature, without avoiding any topic, will you find it abhorrent?"

King Wen replied: "Only a man of true humanity⁵ can accept corrections and remonstrance. I have no abhorrence of true nature, so what is your meaning?"

The T'ai Kung said: "When the line is thin and the bait glittering, only small fish will eat it. When the line is heavier and the bait fragrant, medium-sized fish will eat it. But when the line is heavy and the bait generous, large fish will eat it. When the fish take the bait, they will be caught on the line. When men take their salary, they will submit to the ruler. When you catch fish with bait, the fish can be killed. When you catch men with remuneration, they can be made to exhaust their abilities for you. If you use your family to gain the state, the state can be plucked. If you use your state, the world can be completely acquired.

"Alas, flourishing and florid, although they assemble together they will be scattered! Silent and still, the Sage Ruler's glory will inevitably extend far! Subtle and mysterious, the Virtue of the Sage Ruler as it attracts the people! He alone sees it. Wondrous and joyful, the plans of the Sage Ruler through which everyone seeks and returns to their appropriate places, while he establishes the measures that will gather in their hearts."

King Wen inquired: "How shall we proceed to establish measures so that All under Heaven will give their allegiance?"

The T'ai Kung said: "All under Heaven is not one man's domain. All under Heaven means just that, *all* under Heaven. Anyone who shares profit with all the people under Heaven will gain the world. Anyone who monopolizes its profits will lose the world. Heaven has its seasons, Earth its resources. Being capable of sharing these in common with the people is true humanity. Wherever there is true humanity, All under Heaven will give their allegiance.

"Sparing the people from death, eliminating the hardships of the people, relieving the misfortunes of the people, and sustaining the people in their extremities is Virtue. Wherever there is Virtue, All under Heaven will give their allegiance.

"Sharing worries, pleasures, likes, and dislikes with the people constitutes righteousness. Where there is righteousness the people will go.

"In general, people hate death and take pleasure in life. They love Virtue and incline to profit. The ability to produce profit accords with the Tao. Where the Tao resides, All under Heaven will give their allegiance."

King Wen bowed twice and said: "True wisdom! Do I dare not accept Heaven's edict and mandate?"

He had the T'ai Kung ride in the chariot and returned with him, establishing him as his teacher.

2. Fullness and Emptiness⁶

King Wen inquired of the T'ai Kung: "The world is replete with a dazzling array of states—some full, others empty, some well ordered, others in chaos. How does it come to be thus? Is it that the moral qualities of these rulers are not the same? Or that the changes and transformations of the seasons of Heaven naturally cause it to be thus?"

The T'ai Kung said: "If the ruler lacks moral worth, then the state will be in danger and the people in turbulence. If the ruler is a Worthy or a Sage, then the state will be at peace and the people well ordered. Fortune and misfortune lie with the ruler, not with the seasons of Heaven."

King Wen: "May I hear about the Sages of antiquity?"

T'ai Kung: "Former generations referred to Emperor Yao, in his kingship over the realm in antiquity, as a Worthy ruler."

King Wen: "What was his administration like?"

T'ai Kung: "When Yao was king of the world he did not adorn himself with gold, silver, pearls, and jade.⁷ He did not wear brocaded, embroidered, or elegantly decorated clothes. He did not look at strange, odd, rare, or unusual things. He did not treasure items of amusement nor listen to licentious music. He did not whitewash the walls around the palace or the buildings nor decoratively carve the beams, square and round rafters, and pillars. He did not even trim the reeds that grew all about his courtyards. He used a deerskin robe to ward off the cold, while simple clothes covered his body. He ate coarse millet and unpolished grains and thick soups from rough vegetables. He did not, through the [untimely imposition of] labor service, injure the people's seasons for agriculture and sericulture. He reduced his desires and constrained his will, managing affairs by nonaction.

"He honored the positions of the officials who were loyal, upright, and upheld the laws, and made generous the salaries of those who were pure and scrupulous and loved people. He loved and respected those among the people who were filial and compassionate, and he comforted and encouraged those who exhausted their strength in agriculture and sericulture. Pennants

distinguished the virtuous from the evil, being displayed at the gates of the village lanes. He tranquilized his heart and rectified the constraints [of social forms].⁸ With laws and measures he prohibited evil and artifice.

"Among those he hated, if anyone had merit he would invariably reward him. Among those he loved, if anyone were guilty of an offense he would certainly punish him. He preserved and nurtured the widows, widowers, orphans, and solitary elderly and gave aid to the families who had suffered misfortune and loss.

"What he allotted to himself was extremely meager, the taxes and services he required of the people extremely few. Thus the myriad peoples were prosperous and happy and did not have the appearance of suffering from hunger and cold. The hundred surnames revered their ruler as if he were the sun and moon and gave their emotional allegiance as if he were their father and mother."

King Wen: "Great is the Worthy and Virtuous ruler!"

3. Affairs of State

King Wen said to the T'ai Kung: "I would like to learn about the affair of administering the state. If I want to have the ruler honored and the people settled, how should I proceed?"

T'ai Kung: "Just love the people."

King Wen: "How does one love the people?"

T'ai Kung: "Profit them, do not harm them. Help them to succeed, do not defeat them. Give them life, do not slay them. Grant, do not take away. Give them pleasure, do not cause them to suffer. Make them happy, do not cause them to be angry."

King Wen: "May I dare ask you to explain the reasons for these?"

T'ai Kung: "When the people do not lose their fundamental occupations, you have profited them. When the farmers do not lose the agricultural seasons, you have completed them. [When you reduce punishments and fines, you give them life.⁹] When you impose light taxes, you give to them. When you keep your palaces, mansions, terraces, and pavilions few, you give them pleasure. When the officials are pure and neither irritating nor troublesome, you make them happy.

"But when the people lose their fundamental occupations, you harm them. When the farmers lose the agricultural seasons, you defeat them. When they are innocent but you punish them, you kill them. When you impose heavy taxes, you take from them. When you construct numerous palaces, mansions, terraces, and pavilions, thereby wearing out the people's

strength, you make it bitter for them. When the officials are corrupt, irritating, and troublesome, you anger them.

"Thus one who excels at administering a state governs the people as parents govern their beloved children or as an older brother acts toward his beloved younger brother. When they see their hunger and cold, they are troubled for them. When they see their labors and suffering, they grieve for them.

"Rewards and punishments should be implemented as if being imposed upon yourself. Taxes should be imposed as if taking from yourself. This is the Way to love the people."

4. The Great Forms of Etiquette

King Wen asked T'ai Kung: "What is the proper form of etiquette (*li*)¹⁰ between ruler and minister?"

The T'ai Kung said: "The ruler only needs to draw near to the people; subordinates only need to be submissive. He must approach them, not being distant from any. They must be submissive without hiding anything. The ruler wants only to be all-encompassing; subordinates want only to be settled [in their positions]. If he is all-encompassing he will be like Heaven. If they are settled, they will be like Earth. One Heaven, one Earth—the Great Li is then complete."

King Wen: "How should the ruler act in his position?"

T'ai Kung: "He should be composed, dignified, and quiet. His softness and self-constraint should be established first. He should excel at giving and not be contentious. He should empty his mind and tranquilize his intentions, awaiting events with uprightness."

King Wen inquired: "How should the ruler listen to affairs?"

The T'ai Kung replied: "He should not carelessly allow them nor go against opinion and oppose them. If he allows them in this fashion, he will lose his central control; if he opposes them in this way, he will close off his access.

"He should be like the height of a mountain which—when looked up to—cannot be perceived, or the depths of a great abyss which—when measured—cannot be fathomed. Such spiritual and enlightened Virtue is the pinnacle of uprightness and tranquility."

King Wen inquired: "What should the ruler's wisdom be like?"

The T'ai Kung: "The eye values clarity, the ear values sharpness, the mind values wisdom. If you look with the eyes of All under Heaven, there is nothing you will not see. If you listen with the ears of All under Heaven, there is nothing you will not hear. If you think with the minds of All under Heaven,

there is nothing you will not know. When [you receive information from all directions], just like the spokes converging on the hub of a wheel, your clarity will not be obfuscated."

5. Clear Instructions

King Wen, lying in bed seriously ill, summoned T'ai Kung Wang and Imperial Prince Fa [King Wu] to his side. "Alas, Heaven is about to abandon me. Chou's state altars will soon be entrusted to you. Today I want you, my teacher, to discuss the great principles of the Tao in order to clearly transmit them to my son and grandsons."

T'ai Kung said: "My king, what do you want to ask about?"

King Wen: "May I hear about the Tao of the former Sages—where it stops, where it begins?"

T'ai Kung: "If one sees good but is dilatory [in doing it], if the time for action arrives and one is doubtful, if you know something is wrong but you sanction it—it is in these three that the Tao stops. If one is soft and quiet, dignified and respectful, strong yet genial, tolerant yet hard—it is in these four that the Tao begins. Accordingly, when righteousness overcomes desire one will flourish; when desire overcomes righteousness one will perish. When respect overcomes dilatoriness it is auspicious; when dilatoriness overcomes respect one is destroyed."

6. Six Preservations

King Wen asked the T'ai Kung: "How does the ruler of the state and leader of the people come to lose his position?"

The T'ai Kung said: "He is not cautious about whom he has as associates. The ruler has 'six preservations' and 'three treasures.'"

King Wen asked: "What are the six preservations?"

The T'ai Kung: "The first is called benevolence, the second righteousness, the third loyalty, the fourth trust [good faith], the fifth courage, and the sixth planning. These are referred to as the 'six preservations.'"

King Wen asked: "How does one go about carefully selecting men using the six preservations?"

T'ai Kung: "Make them rich and observe whether they do not commit offenses. Give them rank and observe whether they do not become arrogant. Entrust them with responsibility and see whether they will not change. Employ them and see whether they will not conceal anything. Endanger them

and see whether they are not afraid. Give them the management of affairs and see whether they are not perplexed.

"If you make them rich but they do not commit offenses, they are benevolent. If you give them rank and they do not grow arrogant, they are righteous. If you entrust them with office and they do not change, they are loyal. If you employ them and they do not conceal anything, they are trustworthy. If you put them in danger and they are not afraid, they are courageous. If you give them the management of affairs and they are not perplexed, they are capable of making plans.

"The ruler must not loan the 'three treasures' to other men. If he loans them to other men the ruler will lose his awesomeness."

King Wen: "May I ask about the three treasures?"

T'ai Kung: "Great agriculture, great industry, and great commerce are referred to as the 'three treasures.' If you have the farmers dwell solely in districts of farmers, then the five grains will be sufficient. If you have the artisans dwell solely in districts of artisans, then the implements will be adequate. If you have the merchants dwell solely in districts of merchants, then the material goods will be sufficient."¹¹

"If the three treasures are each settled in their places, then the people will not scheme. Do not allow confusion among their districts, do not allow confusion among their clans. Ministers should not be more wealthy than the ruler. No other cities should be larger than the ruler's state capital. When the six preservations are fully implemented, the ruler will flourish. When the three treasures are complete, the state will be secure."

7. Preserving the State's Territory

King Wen asked the T'ai Kung: "How does one preserve the state's territory?"

T'ai Kung: "Do not estrange your relatives. Do not neglect the masses. Be conciliatory and solicitous toward nearby states and control the four quarters.

"Do not loan the handles of state to other men."¹² If you loan the handles of state to other men, then you will lose your authority [*ch'üan*]. Do not dig valleys deeper to increase hills. Do not abandon the foundation to govern the branches. When the sun is at midday you should dry things. If you grasp a knife you must cut. If you hold an ax you must attack.

"If, at the height of the day, you do not dry things in the sun, this is termed losing the time. If you grasp a knife but do not cut anything, you will lose the

moment for profits. If you hold an ax but do not attack, then bandits will come.

"If trickling streams are not blocked, they will become great rivers. If you do not extinguish the smallest flames, what will you do about a great conflagration? If you do not eliminate the two-leaf sapling, how will you use your ax [when the tree has grown]?"

"For this reason the ruler must focus on developing wealth within his state. Without material wealth he has nothing with which to be benevolent. If he does not bespread beneficence he will have nothing with which to bring his relatives together."¹³ If he estranges his relatives it will be harmful. If he loses the common people he will be defeated.

"Do not loan sharp weapons to other men."¹⁴ If you loan sharp weapons to other men, you will be hurt by them and will not live out your allotted span of years."

King Wen said: "What do you mean by benevolence and righteousness?"

The T'ai Kung: "Respect the common people, unite your relatives. If you respect the common people they will be at peace. And if you unite your relatives they will be happy. This is the way to implement the essential cords of benevolence and righteousness.

"Do not allow other men to snatch away your awesomeness. Rely on your wisdom, follow the constant. Those that submit and accord with you, treat generously with Virtue. Those that oppose you, break with force. If you respect the people and are decisive, then All under Heaven will be peaceful and submissive."

8. Preserving the State

King Wen asked the T'ai Kung: "How does one preserve the state?"

T'ai Kung: "You should observe a vegetarian fast, for I am about to speak to you about the essential principles of Heaven and Earth, what the four seasons produce, the Tao of true humanity and sagacity, and the nature of the people's impulses."

The King observed a vegetarian regime for seven days, then, facing north, bowed twice and requested instruction.

The T'ai Kung said: "Heaven gives birth to the four seasons, Earth produces the myriad things. Under Heaven there are the people, and the Sage acts as their shepherd.

"Thus the Tao of spring is birth and the myriad things begin to flourish. The Tao of summer is growth; the myriad things mature. The Tao of autumn is gathering; the myriad things are full. The Tao of winter is storing away;

the myriad things are still. When they are full they are stored away; after they are stored away they again revive. No one knows where it ends, no one knows where it begins. The Sage accords with it and models himself on Heaven and Earth. Thus when the realm is well ordered, his benevolence and sagacity are hidden. When All under Heaven are in turbulence, his benevolence and sagacity flourish. This is the true Tao.

"In his position between Heaven and Earth, what the Sage treasures is substantial and vast. Relying on the constant to view it, the people are at peace. But when the people are agitated it creates impulses. When impulses stir, conflict over gain and loss arises. Thus it is initiated in yin, but coalesces in yang. If someone ventures to be the first leader, All under Heaven will unite with him.¹⁵ At the extreme, when things return to normal, do not continue to advance and contend, do not withdraw and yield. If you can preserve the state in this fashion, you will share the splendor of Heaven and Earth."

9. Honoring the Worthy

King Wen asked the T'ai Kung: "Among those I rule,¹⁶ who should be elevated, who should be placed in inferior positions? Who should be selected for employment, who cast aside? How should they be restricted, how stopped?"

The T'ai Kung said: "Elevate the Worthy, and place the unworthy in inferior positions. Choose the sincere and trustworthy, eliminate the deceptive and artful. Prohibit violence and turbulence, stop extravagance and ease. Accordingly, one who exercises kingship over the people recognizes 'six thieves' and 'seven harms.'"

King Wen said: "I would like to know about its Tao."

T'ai Kung: "As for the 'six thieves':

"First, if your subordinates build large palaces and mansions, pools and terraces, and amble about enjoying the pleasures of scenery and female musicians, it will injure the king's Virtue.

"Second, when the people are not engaged in agriculture and sericulture but instead give rein to their tempers and travel about as bravados, disdain and transgressing the laws and prohibitions, not following the instructions of the officials, it harms the king's transforming influence.¹⁷

"Third, when officials form cliques and parties—obfuscating the worthy and wise, obstructing the ruler's clarity—it injures the king's authority [*ch'üan*].

"Fourth, when the knights are contrary-minded and conspicuously display 'high moral standards'—taking such behavior to be powerful expression of their *ch'i*¹⁸—and have private relationships with other feudal lords—slighting their own ruler—it injures the king's awesomeness.

"Fifth, when subordinates disdain titles and positions, are contemptuous of the administrators, and are ashamed to face hardship for their ruler, it injures the efforts of the meritorious subordinates.

"Sixth, when the strong clans encroach on others—seizing what they want, insulting and ridiculing the poor and weak—it injures the work of the common people.

"The 'seven harms':

"First, men without knowledge or strategic planning ability are generously rewarded and honored with rank. Therefore, the strong and courageous who regard war lightly take their chances in the field. The king must be careful not to employ them as generals.

"Second, they have reputation but lack substance. What they say is constantly shifting. They conceal the good and point out deficiencies. They view advancement and dismissal as a question of skill. The king should be careful not to make plans with them.

"Third, they make their appearance simple, wear ugly clothes, speak about actionless action in order to seek fame, and talk about non-desire in order to gain profit. They are artificial men, and the king should be careful not to bring them near.

"Fourth, they wear strange caps and belts, and their clothes are overflowing. They listen widely to the disputations of others and speak speciously about unrealistic ideas, displaying them as a sort of personal adornment. They dwell in poverty and live in tranquility, deprecating the customs of the world. They are cunning people, and the king should be careful not to favor them.

"Fifth, with slander, obsequiousness, and pandering, they seek office and rank. They are courageous and daring, treating death lightly, out of their greed for salary and position. They are not concerned with major affairs but move solely out of avarice. With lofty talk and specious discussions, they please the ruler. The king should be careful not to employ them.

"Sixth, they have buildings elaborately carved and inlaid. They promote artifice and flowery adornment to the injury of agriculture. You must prohibit them.

"Seventh, they create magical formulas and weird techniques, practice sorcery and witchcraft, advance unorthodox ways, and circulate inauspicious sayings, confusing and befuddling the good people. The king must stop them.

"Now when the people do not exhaust their strength, they are not our people. If the officers are not sincere and trustworthy, they are not our officers. If the ministers do not offer loyal remonstrance, they are not our ministers. If the officials are not evenhanded, pure, nor love the people, they are not our officials. If the chancellor cannot enrich the state and strengthen the army, harmonize yin and yang, and ensure security for the ruler of a state of ten thousand chariots—and moreover properly control the ministers, set names and realities, make clear rewards and punishments, and give pleasure to the people—he is not our chancellor.

"Now the Tao of the king is like that of a dragon's head. He dwells in the heights and looks out far. He sees deeply and listens carefully. He displays his form but conceals his nature. He is like the heights of Heaven, which cannot be perceived. He is like the depths of an abyss, which cannot be fathomed. Thus if he should get angry but does not, evil subordinates will arise. If he should execute but does not, great thieves will appear. If strategic military power is not exercised, enemy states will grow strong."

King Wen said: "Excellent!"

10. Advancing the Worthy

King Wen asked the T'ai Kung: "How does it happen that a ruler may exert himself to advance the Worthy but is unable to obtain any results from such efforts, and in fact the world grows increasingly turbulent, even to the point that he is endangered or perishes?"

T'ai Kung: "If one advances the Worthy but doesn't employ them, this is attaining the name of 'advancing the Worthy' but lacking the substance of 'using the Worthy.'"

King Wen asked: "Whence comes the error?"

T'ai Kung: "The error lies in wanting to employ men who are popularly praised rather than obtaining true Worthies."

King Wen: "How is that?"

The T'ai Kung said: "If the ruler takes those that the world commonly praises as being Worthies and those that they condemn as being worthless, then the larger cliques will advance and the smaller ones will retreat. In this situation groups of evil individuals will associate together to obscure the Worthy. Loyal subordinates will die even though innocent. And perverse subordinates will obtain rank and position through empty fame. In this way, as turbulence continues to grow in the world, the state cannot avoid danger and destruction."

King Wen asked: "How does one advance the Worthy?"

T'ai Kung replied: "Your general and chancellor should divide the responsibility, each of them selecting men based on the names of the positions. In accord with the name of the position, they will assess the substance required. In selecting men, they will evaluate their abilities, making the reality of their talents match the name of the position. When the name matches the reality, you will have realized the Tao for advancing the Worthy."¹⁹

11. Rewards and Punishments

King Wen asked the T'ai Kung: "Rewards are the means to preserve the encouragement [of the good], punishments the means to display the rectification of evil. By rewarding one man I want to stimulate a hundred, by punishing one man rectify the multitude. How can I do it?"

The T'ai Kung said: "In general, in employing rewards one values credibility; in employing punishments one values certainty. When rewards are trusted and punishments inevitable wherever the eye sees and the ear hears, then even where they do not see or hear there is no one who will not be transformed in their secrecy. Since the ruler's sincerity extends to Heaven and Earth and penetrates to the spirits, how much the more so to men?"

12. The Tao of the Military

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "What is the Tao of the military?"²⁰

The T'ai Kung said: "In general, as for the Tao of the military, nothing surpasses unity. The unified can come alone, can depart alone. The Yellow Emperor said: 'Unification approaches the Tao and touches on the spiritual.' Its employment lies in the subtle;²¹ its conspicuous manifestation lies in the strategic configuration of power; its completion lies with the ruler. Thus the Sage Kings termed weapons evil implements, but when they had no alternative, they employed them.

"Today the Shang king knows about existence, but not about perishing. He knows pleasure, but not disaster. Now existence does not lie in existence, but in thinking about perishing. Pleasure does not lie in pleasure, but in contemplating disaster. Now that you have already pondered the source of such changes, why do you trouble yourself about the future flow of events?"

King Wu said: "Suppose two armies encounter each other. The enemy cannot come forward, and we cannot go forward. Each side goes about establishing fortifications and defenses without daring to be the first to attack. If I want to launch a sudden attack but lack any tactical advantage, what should I do?"

The T'ai Kung said: "Make an outward display of confusion while actually being well ordered. Show an appearance of hunger while actually being well fed. Keep your sharp weapons within and show only dull and poor weapons outside. Have some troops come together, others split up; some assemble, others scatter.²² Make secret plans, keep your intentions secret. Raise the height of fortifications, and conceal your elite troops. If the officers are silent, not making any sounds, the enemy will not know our preparations. Then if you want to take his western flank, attack the eastern one."

King Wu said: "If the enemy knows my true situation and has penetrated my plans, what should I do?"

The T'ai Kung said: "The technique for military conquest is to carefully investigate the enemy's intentions and quickly take advantage of them, launching a sudden attack where unexpected."²³

武韜

II

MARTIAL SECRET TEACHING

13. Opening Instructions

King Wen, in the capital of Feng, summoned the T'ai Kung. "Alas! The Shang king is extremely perverse, judging the innocent guilty and having them executed. If you assist me in my concern for these people, how might we proceed?"

The T'ai Kung replied: "You should cultivate your Virtue, submit to the guidance of Worthy men, extend beneficence to the people, and observe the Tao of Heaven. If there are no ill omens in the Tao of Heaven, you cannot initiate the movement [to revolt]. If there are no misfortunes in the Tao of Man, your planning cannot precede them. You must first see Heavenly signs and moreover witness human misfortune, and only then can you make plans. You must look at the Shang king's yang aspects [his government], and moreover his yin side [personal deportment], and only then will you know his mind. You must look at his external activities, and moreover his internal ones, and only then will you know his thoughts. You must observe those distant from him and also observe those close to him, and only then will you know his emotions.

"If you implement the Tao, the Tao can be attained. If you enter by the gate, the gate can be entered. If you set up the proper forms of etiquette [*li*], the *li* can be perfected. If you fight with the strong, the strong can be conquered. If you can attain complete victory without fighting, without the great army suffering any losses, you will have penetrated even the realm of ghosts and spirits. How marvelous! How subtle!

"If you suffer the same illness as other people and you all aid each other; if you have the same emotions and complete each other; the same hatreds and assist each other; and the same likes and seek them together—then without any armored soldiers you will win; without any battering rams you will have attacked; and without moats and ditches you will have defended.

"The greatest wisdom is not wise; the greatest plans not planned; the greatest courage not courageous; the greatest gain not profitable. If you profit All under Heaven, All under Heaven will be open to you. If you harm All under Heaven, All under Heaven will be closed. All under Heaven is not the property of one man but of All under Heaven. If you take All under Heaven as if pursuing some wild animal, then All under Heaven will want to carve [the realm] up like a piece of meat. If you all ride in the same boat to cross over the water, after completing the crossing you will all have profited. However, if you fail to make the crossing, then you will all suffer the harm.²⁴ [If you act as if you're all on the same vessel], the empire will be open to your aim, and none will be closed to you.

"He who does not take from the people takes the people. He who does not take [from]²⁵ the people, the people will profit. He who does not take [from] the states, the states will profit. He who does not take from All under Heaven, All under Heaven will profit. Thus the Tao lies in what cannot be seen; affairs lie in what cannot be heard; and victory lies in what cannot be known. How marvelous! How subtle!

"When an eagle is about the attack, it will fly low and draw in its wings.²⁶ When a fierce wild cat is about to strike, it will lay back its ears and crouch down low. When the Sage is about to move, he will certainly display a stupid countenance.

"Now there is the case of Shang, where the people muddle and confuse each other. Mixed up and extravagant, their love of pleasure and sex is endless. This is a sign of a doomed state. I have observed their fields—weeds and grass overwhelm the crops. I have observed their people—the perverse and crooked overcome the straight and upright. I have observed their officials—they are violent, perverse, inhumane, and evil. They overthrow the laws and make chaos of the punishments. Neither the upper nor lower ranks have awakened to this state of affairs. It is time for their state to perish.

"When the sun appears the myriad things are all illuminated. When great righteousness appears the myriad things all profit. When the great army appears the myriad things all submit. Great is the Virtue of the Sage! Listening by himself, seeing by himself, this is his pleasure!"

14. Civil Instructions

King Wen asked the T'ai Kung: "What does the Sage preserve?"

The T'ai Kung said: "What worries does he have? What constraints? The myriad things all naturally realize their positions. What constraints, what

worries? The myriad things all flourish. No one realizes the transforming influence of government; moreover, no one realizes the effects of the passing of time.²⁷ The Sage preserves [the Tao of actionless action], and the myriad things are transformed. What is exhausted? When things reach the end they return again to the beginning. Relaxed and complacent he turns about, seeking it. Seeking it he gains it and cannot but store it. Having already stored it he cannot but implement it. Having already implemented it he does not turn about and make it clear [that he did so]. Now because Heaven and Earth do not illuminate themselves, they are forever able to give birth [to the myriad things].²⁸ The Sage does not cast light upon himself so he is able to attain a glorious name.

"The Sages of antiquity assembled people to comprise families, assembled families to compose states, and assembled states to constitute the realm of All under Heaven. They divided the realm and enfeoffed Worthy men to administer the states. They officially designated [this order] the 'Great Outline.'

"They promulgated the government's instructions and accorded with the people's customs. They transformed the multitude of crooked into the straight, changing their form and appearance. Although the customs of the various states were not the same, they all took pleasure in their respective places. The people loved their rulers, so they termed [this transformation] the 'Great Settlement.'

"Ah, the Sage concentrates on tranquilizing them, the Worthy focuses on rectifying them. The stupid man cannot be upright, therefore he contends with other men. When the ruler labors, punishments become numerous. When punishments are numerous, the people are troubled. When the people are troubled, they leave and wander off. No one, of whatever position, can be settled in his life, and generations on end have no rest. This they termed the 'Great Loss.'

"The people of the world are like flowing water. If you obstruct it, it will stop. If you open a way, it will flow. If you keep it quiet, it will be clear. How spiritual! When the Sage sees the beginning, he knows the end."

King Wen said: "How does one tranquilize them?"

The T'ai Kung: "Heaven has its constant forms, the people have their normal lives. If you share life with All under Heaven, then All under Heaven will be tranquil. The pinnacle accords with them, the next-highest transforms them. When the people are transformed and follow their government, then Heaven takes no action but affairs are complete. The people do not give anything [to the ruler] [so] are enriched of themselves.²⁹ This is the Virtue of the Sage."

King Wen: "What my lord has said accords with what I embrace. From dawn to night I will think about it, never forgetting it, employing it as our constant principle."

15. Civil Offensive

King Wen asked the T'ai Kung: "What are the methods for civil³⁰ offensives?"

The T'ai Kung replied: "There are twelve measures for civil offensives.

"First, accord with what he likes in order to accommodate his wishes. He will eventually grow arrogant and invariably mount some perverse affair. If you can appear to follow along, you will certainly be able to eliminate him.

"Second, become familiar with those he loves in order to fragment his awesomeness. When men have two different inclinations, their loyalty invariably declines. When his court no longer has any loyal ministers, the state altars will inevitably be endangered.

"Third, covertly bribe his assistants, fostering a deep relationship with them. While they will bodily stand in his court, their emotions will be directed outside it. The state will certainly suffer harm.

"Fourth, assist him in his licentiousness and indulgence in music in order to dissipate his will. Make him generous gifts of pearls and jade, and ply him with beautiful women. Speak deferentially, listen respectfully, follow his commands, and accord with him in everything. He will never imagine you might be in conflict with him. Our treacherous measures will then be settled.

"Fifth, treat his loyal officials very generously, but reduce the gifts you provide [to the ruler]. Delay his emissaries; do not listen to their missions. When he eventually dispatches other men, treat them with sincerity, embrace and trust them. The ruler will then again feel you are in harmony with him. If you manage to treat [his formerly loyal officials] very generously, his state can then be plotted against.³¹

"Sixth, make secret alliances with his favored ministers, but visibly keep his less-favored outside officials at a distance. His talented people will then be under external influence, while enemy states encroach upon his territory. Few states in such a situation have survived.

"Seventh, if you want to bind his heart to you, you must offer generous presents. To gather in his assistants, loyal associates, and loved ones, you must secretly show them the gains they can realize by colluding with you. Have them slight their work, and then their preparations will be futile.

"Eighth, gift him with great treasures, and make plans with him. When the plans are successful and profit him, he will have faith in you because of the

profits. This is what is termed 'being closely embraced.' The result of being closely embraced is that he will inevitably be used by us. When someone rules a state but is externally [controlled], his territory will inevitably be defeated.

"Ninth, honor him with praise. Do nothing that will cause him personal discomfort. Display the proper respect accruing to a great power, and your obedience will certainly be trusted. Magnify his honor; be the first to gloriously praise him, humbly embellishing him as a Sage. Then his state will suffer great loss!

"Tenth, be submissive so that he will trust you, and thereby learn about his true situation. Accept his ideas and respond to his affairs as if you were twins. Once you have learned everything, subtly gather in [his power]. Thus when the ultimate day arrives, it will seem as if Heaven itself destroyed him.

"Eleventh, block up his access by means of the Tao. Among subordinates there is no one who does not value rank and wealth nor hate danger and misfortune. Secretly express great respect toward them, and gradually bestow valuable gifts in order to gather in the more outstanding talents. Accumulate your own resources until they become very substantial, but manifest an external appearance of shortage. Covertly bring in wise knights, and entrust them with planning great strategy. Attract courageous knights, and augment their spirit. Even when they are more than sufficiently rich and honored, constantly add to their riches. When your faction has been fully established [you will have attained the objective] referred to as 'blocking his access.' If someone has a state but his access is blocked, how can he be considered as having the state?

"Twelfth, support his dissolute officials in order to confuse him. Introduce beautiful women and licentious sounds in order to befuddle him. Send him outstanding dogs and horses in order to tire him. From time to time allow him great power in order to entice him [to greater arrogance]. Then investigate Heaven's signs, and plot with the world against him.

"When these twelve measures are fully employed, they will become a military weapon. Thus when, as it is said, one 'looks at Heaven above and investigates Earth below' and the proper signs are already visible, attack him."

16. Instructions on According with the People

King Wen asked the T'ai Kung: "What should one do so that he can govern All under Heaven?"

The T'ai Kung said: "When your greatness overspreads All under Heaven, only then will you be able to encompass it. When your trustworthiness has

overspread All under Heaven, only then will you be able to make covenants with it. When your benevolence has overspread All under Heaven, only then will you be able to embrace it. When your grace has overspread All under Heaven, only then can you preserve it. When your authority covers the world, only then will you be able not to lose it. If you govern without doubt, then the revolutions of Heaven will not be able to shift [your rule] nor the changes of the seasons be able to affect it. Only when these six are complete will you be able to establish a government for All under Heaven.

"Accordingly, one who profits All under Heaven will find All under Heaven open to him. One who harms All under Heaven will find All under Heaven closed to him. If one gives life to All under Heaven, All under Heaven will regard him as Virtuous. If one kills All under Heaven, All under Heaven will regard him as a brigand. If one penetrates to All under Heaven, All under Heaven will be accessible to him; if one impoverishes All under Heaven, All under Heaven will regard him as their enemy. One who gives peace to All under Heaven, All under Heaven will rely on; one who endangers All under Heaven, All under Heaven will view as a disaster. All under Heaven is not the realm of one man. Only one who possesses the Tao can dwell [in the position of authority]."

17. Three Doubts

King Wu inquired of the T'ai Kung: "I want to attain our aim [of overthrowing the Shang], but I have three doubts. I am afraid that our strength will be inadequate to attack the strong, to estrange his close supporters within the court, and disperse his people. What should I do?"

The T'ai Kung replied: "Accord with the situation, be very cautious in making plans, and employ your material resources. Now in order to attack the strong, you must nurture them to make them even stronger, and increase them to make them even more extensive. What is too strong will certainly break; what is too extended must have deficiencies.³² Attack the strong through his strength. Cause the estrangement of his favored officials by using his favorites, and disperse his people by means of the people.³³

"Now in the Tao of planning, thoroughness and secrecy are treasured. You should become involved with him in numerous affairs and ply him with temptations of profit. Conflict will then surely arise.

"If you want to cause his close supporters to become estranged from him, you must do it by using what they love—making gifts to those he favors, giving them what they want. Tempt them with what they find profitable, thereby making them disaffected, and cause them to be unable to attain their

ambitions. Those who covet profits will be extremely happy at the prospects, and their remaining doubts will be ended.

"Now without doubt the Tao for attacking is to first obfuscate the king's clarity and then attack his strength, destroying his greatness and eliminating the misfortune of the people. Debauch him with beautiful women, entice him with profit. Nurture him with flavors, and provide him with the company of female musicians. Then after you have caused his subordinates to become estranged from him, you must cause the people to grow distant from him while never letting him know your plans. Appear to support him and draw him into your trap. Do not let him become aware of what is happening, for only then can your plan be successful.

"When bestowing your beneficence on the people, you cannot begrudge the expense. The people are like cows and horses. Frequently make gifts of food and clothing and follow up by loving them.³⁴

"The mind is the means to open up knowledge; knowledge the means to open up the source of wealth; and wealth the means to open up the people. Gaining the allegiance of the people is the way to attract Worthy men. When one is enlightened by Sagely advisers, he can become king of all the world."

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III

DRAGON SECRET TEACHING

18. The King's Wings

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "When the king commands the army he must have 'legs and arms' [top assistants] and 'feathers and wings' [aides] to bring about his awesomeness and spiritualness. How should this be done?"

The T'ai Kung said: "Whenever one mobilizes the army it takes the commanding general as its fate. Its fate lies in a penetrating understanding of all aspects, not clinging to one technique. In accord with their abilities assign duties—each one taking charge of what they are good at, constantly changing and transforming with the times, to create the essential principles and order. Thus the general has seventy-two 'legs and arms' and 'feathers and wings' in order to respond to the Tao of Heaven. Prepare their number according to method, being careful that they know its orders and principles. When you have all the different abilities and various skills, then the myriad affairs will be complete."

King Wu asked: "May I ask about the various categories?"

The T'ai Kung said: "*Fu-hsin* [Chief of Planning],³⁵ one: in charge of advising about secret plans for responding to sudden events; investigating Heaven so as to eliminate sudden change; exercising general supervision over all planning; and protecting and preserving the lives of the people.

"Planning officers, five: responsible for planning security and danger; anticipating the unforeseen; discussing performance and ability; making clear rewards and punishments; appointing officers; deciding the doubtful; and determining what is advisable and what is not.

"Astrologers, three: undertaking responsibility for the stars and calendar; observing the wind and *ch'i*; predicting auspicious days and times; investigating signs and phenomena; verifying disasters and abnormalities; and

knowing Heaven's mind with regard to the moment for completion or abandonment.³⁶

"Topographers, three: in charge of the army's disposition and strategic configuration of power when moving and stopped [and of] information on strategic advantages and disadvantages; precipitous and easy passages, both near and far; and water and dry land, mountains and defiles, so as not to lose the advantages of terrain.

"Strategists, nine: responsible for discussing divergent views; analyzing the probable success or failure of various operations; selecting the weapons and training men in their use; and identifying those who violate the ordinances.

"Supply officers, four: responsible for calculating the requirements for food and water; preparing the food stocks and supplies and transporting the provisions along the route; and supplying the five grains so as to ensure that the army will not suffer any hardship or shortage.

"Officers for Flourishing Awesomeness, four: responsible for picking men of talent and strength; for discussing weapons and armor; for setting up attacks that race like the wind and strike like thunder so that [the enemy] does not know where they come from.

"Secret Signals officers,³⁷ three: responsible for the pennants and drums, for clearly [signaling] to the eyes and ears; for creating deceptive signs and seals [and] issuing false designations and orders; and for stealthily and hastily moving back and forth, going in and out like spirits.

"Legs and Arms, four: responsible for undertaking heavy duties and handling difficult tasks; for the repair and maintenance of ditches and moats; and for keeping the walls and ramparts in repair in order to defend against and repel [the enemy].

"Liaison officers, two: responsible for gathering what has been lost and supplementing what is in error; receiving honored guests; holding discussions and talks; mitigating disasters; and resolving difficulties.

"Officers of Authority, three: responsible for implementing the unorthodox and deceptive; for establishing the different and the unusual, things that people do not recognize; and for putting into effect inexhaustible transformations.³⁸

"Ears and Eyes, seven: responsible for going about everywhere, listening to what people are saying; seeing the changes; and observing the officers in all four directions and the army's true situation.

"Claws and Teeth, five: responsible for raising awesomeness and martial [spirit]; for stimulating and encouraging the Three Armies, causing them to

risk hardship and attack the enemy's elite troops without ever having any doubts or second thoughts.

"Feathers and Wings, four: responsible for flourishing the name and fame [of the army]; for shaking distant lands [with its image]; and for moving all within the four borders in order to weaken the enemy's spirit.

"Roving officers, eight: responsible for spying on [the enemy's] licentiousness and observing their changes; manipulating their emotions; and observing the enemy's thoughts in order to act as spies.

"Officers of Techniques, two: responsible for spreading slander and falsehoods and for calling on ghosts and spirits in order to confuse the minds of the populace.

"Officers of Prescriptions, three: in charge of the hundred medicines; managing blade wounds; and curing the various maladies.

"Accountants, two: responsible for accounting for the provisions and foodstuffs within the Three Armies' encampments and ramparts; for the fiscal materials employed; and for receipts and disbursements."

19. A Discussion of Generals

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "What should a general be?"

The T'ai Kung replied: "Generals have five critical talents and ten excesses."

King Wu said: "Dare I ask you to enumerate them?"

The T'ai Kung elaborated: "What we refer to as the five talents are courage, wisdom, benevolence, trustworthiness, and loyalty. If he is courageous he cannot be overwhelmed. If he is wise he cannot be forced into turmoil. If he is benevolent he will love his men. If he is trustworthy he will not be deceitful. If he is loyal he will not be of two minds.

"What are referred to as the ten errors are as follows: being courageous and treating death lightly; being hasty and impatient; being greedy and loving profit; being benevolent but unable to inflict suffering; being wise but afraid; being trustworthy and liking to trust others; being scrupulous and incorruptible but not loving men; being wise but indecisive; being resolute and self-reliant; and being fearful while liking to entrust responsibility to other men.

"One who is courageous and treats death lightly can be destroyed by violence. One who is hasty and impatient can be destroyed by persistence. One who is greedy and loves profit can be bribed. One who is benevolent but unable to inflict suffering can be worn down. One who is wise but fearful can be distressed.

"One who is trustworthy and likes to trust others can be deceived. One who is scrupulous and incorruptible but does not love men can be insulted. One who is wise but indecisive can be suddenly attacked. One who is resolute and self-reliant can be confounded by events. One who is fearful and likes to entrust responsibility to others can be tricked.

"Thus 'warfare is the greatest affair of state, the Tao of survival or extinction.'³⁹ The fate of the state lies in the hands of the general. 'The general is the support of the state,'⁴⁰ a man that the former kings all valued. Thus in commissioning a general, you cannot but carefully evaluate and investigate his character.

"Thus it is said that two armies will not be victorious, nor will both be defeated. When the army ventures out beyond the borders, before they have been out ten days—even if a state has not perished—one army will certainly have been destroyed and the general killed."

King Wu: "Marvelous!"

20. Selecting Generals

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "If a king wants to raise an army, how should he go about selecting and training heroic officers and determining their moral qualifications?"

The T'ai Kung said: "There are fifteen cases where a knight's external appearance and internal character do not cohere. These are:

"He appears to be a Worthy but [actually] is immoral.

"He seems warm and conscientious but is a thief.

"His countenance is reverent and respectful, but his heart is insolent.

"Externally he is incorruptible and circumspect, but he lacks respect.

"He appears perceptive and sharp but lacks such talent.

"He appears profound but lacks all sincerity.

"He appears adept at planning but is indecisive.

"He appears to be decisive and daring but is incapable.

"He appears guileless but is not trustworthy.

"He appears confused and disoriented but on the contrary is loyal and substantial.

"He appears to engage in specious discourse but is a man of merit and achievement.

"He appears courageous but is afraid.

"He seems severe and remote but on the contrary easily befriends men.

"He appears forbidding but on the contrary is quiet and sincere.

"He appears weak and insubstantial, yet when dispatched outside the state there is nothing he does not accomplish, no mission that he does not execute successfully.

"Those who the world disdains the Sage values. Ordinary men do not know these things; only great wisdom can discern the edge of these matters. This is because the knight's external appearance and internal character do not visibly cohere."

King Wu asked: "How does one know this?"

The T'ai Kung replied: "There are eight forms of evidence by which you may know it. First, question them and observe the details of their reply. Second, verbally confound and perplex them and observe how they change. Third, discuss things which you have secretly learned to observe their sincerity. Fourth, clearly and explicitly question them to observe their virtue. Fifth, appoint them to positions of financial responsibility to observe their honesty. Sixth, test them with beautiful women to observe their uprightness. Seventh, confront them with difficulties to observe their courage. Eighth, get them drunk to observe their deportment. When all eight have been fully explored, then the Worthy and unworthy can be distinguished."

21. Appointing the General

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "What is the Tao for appointing the commanding general?"

The T'ai Kung said: "When the state encounters danger, the ruler should vacate the Main Hall, summon the general, and charge him as follows: 'The security or endangerment of the Altars of State all lie with the army's commanding general. At present such-and-such a state does not act properly submissive. I would like you to lead the army forth to respond to it.'

"After the general has received his mandate, command the Grand Scribe to bore the sacred tortoise shell to divine an auspicious day. Thereafter, to prepare for the chosen day, observe a vegetarian regime for three days, and then go to the ancestral temple to hand over the *fu* and *yüeh* axes.⁴¹

"After the ruler has entered the gate to the temple, he stands facing west. The general enters the temple gate and stands facing north. The ruler personally takes the *yüeh* ax and, holding it by the head, passes the handle to the general, saying: 'From this to Heaven above will be controlled by the General of the Army.' Then taking the *fu* axe by the handle, he should give the blade to the general, saying: 'From this to the depths below will be controlled by the General of the Army. When you see vacuity in the enemy you should advance; when you see substance you should halt.'⁴² Do not assume

that the Three Armies are large and treat the enemy lightly. Do not commit yourself to die just because you have received a heavy responsibility. Do not, because you are honored, regard other men as lowly. Do not rely upon yourself alone and contravene the masses. Do not take verbal facility to be a sign of certainty. When the officers have not yet been seated, do not sit. When the officers have not yet eaten, do not eat. You should share heat and cold with them. If you behave in this way the officers and masses will certainly exhaust their strength in fighting to the death."⁴³

"After the general has received his mandate, he bows and responds to the ruler: 'I have heard that a country cannot follow the commands of another state's government, while an army [in the field] cannot follow central government control. Someone of two minds cannot properly serve his ruler; someone in doubt cannot respond to the enemy. I have already received my mandate and taken sole control of the awesome power of the *fu* and *yüeh* axes. I do not dare return alive. I would like to request that you condescend to grant complete and sole command to me. If you do not permit it, I dare not accept the post of general.' The king then grants it, and the general formally takes his leave and departs."⁴⁴

"Military matters are not determined by the ruler's commands; they all proceed from the commanding general. When [the commanding general] approaches an enemy and decides to engage in battle, he is not of two minds. In this way there is no Heaven above, no Earth below, no enemy in front, and no ruler to the rear. For this reason the wise make plans for him, the courageous fight for him. Their spirit soars to the blue clouds; they are swift like galloping steeds. Even before the blades clash, the enemy surrenders submissively.

"War is won outside the borders of the state, but the general's merit is established within it. Officials are promoted and receive the highest rewards; the hundred surnames rejoice; and the general is blameless. For this reason the winds and rains will be seasonable; the five grains will grow abundantly; and the altars of state will be secure and peaceful."

King Wu said: "Excellent."

22. The General's Awesomeness

King Wu asked: "How does the general create awesomeness? How can he be enlightened? How can he make his prohibitions effective and get his orders implemented?"

The T'ai Kung said: "The general creates awesomeness by executing the great, and becomes enlightened by rewarding the small. Prohibitions are

made effective and laws implemented by careful scrutiny in the use of punishments. Therefore if by executing one man the entire army will quake, kill him. If by rewarding one man the masses will be pleased, reward him. In executing, value the great; in rewarding, value the small. When you kill the powerful and the honored, this is punishment that reaches the pinnacle. When rewards extend down to the cowherds, grooms, and stablemen, these are rewards penetrating downward to the lowest. When punishments reach the pinnacle and rewards penetrate to the lowest, then your awesomeness has been effected."

23. Encouraging the Army

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "When we attack I want the masses of the Three Armies to contend with each other to scale the wall first, and compete with each other to be in the forefront when we fight in the field. When they hear the sound of the gongs [to retreat] they will be angry, and when they hear the sound of the drums [to advance] they will be happy. How can we accomplish this?"

The T'ai Kung said: "A general has three techniques for attaining victory."

King Wu asked: "May I ask what they are?"

The T'ai Kung: "If in winter the general does not wear a fur robe, in summer does not carry a fan, and in the rain does not set up a canopy, he is called a 'general of proper form.' Unless the general himself submits to these observances, he will not have the means to know the cold and warmth of the officers and soldiers.

"If, when they advance into ravines and obstacles or encounter muddy terrain, the general always takes the first steps, he is termed a 'general of strength.' If the general does not personally exert his strength, he has no means to know the labors and hardships of the officers and soldiers.

"If only after the men are settled in their encampment does the general retire; only after all the cooks have finished their cooking does he go in to eat; and if the army does not light fires to keep warm he also does not have one, he is termed a 'general who stifles desire.' Unless the general himself practices stifling his desires, he has no way to know the hunger and satiety of the officers and troops.

"The general shares heat and cold, labor and suffering, hunger and satiety with the officers and men. Therefore when the masses of the Three Armies hear the sound of the drum they are happy, and when they hear the sound of the gong they are angry. When attacking a high wall or crossing a deep lake,

under a hail of arrows and stones, the officers will compete to be first to scale the wall. When the naked blades clash, the officers will compete to be the first to go forward. It is not because they like death and take pleasure in being wounded, but because the general knows their feelings of heat and cold, hunger and satiety, and clearly displays his knowledge of their labor and suffering."

24. Secret Tallies⁴⁵

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "If we lead the army deep into the territory of the feudal lords where the Three Armies suddenly suffer some delay or require urgent action—perhaps a situation to our advantage, or one to our disadvantage—and I⁴⁶ want to communicate between those nearby and those more distant, respond to the outside from the inside, in order to supply the use of the Three Armies—how should we do it?"

The T'ai Kung said: "The ruler and his generals have a system of secret tallies, altogether consisting of eight grades.

"There is a tally signifying a great victory over the enemy, one foot long.

"There is a tally for destroying the enemy's army and killing their general, nine inches long.

"There is a tally for forcing the surrender of the enemy's walls and capturing the town, eight inches long.

"There is a tally for driving the enemy back and reporting deep penetration, seven inches long.

"There is a tally to alert the masses to prepare for stalwart defensive measures, six inches long.

"There is a tally requesting supplies and additional soldiers, five inches long.

"There is a tally signifying the army's defeat and the general's death, four inches long.

"There is a tally signifying the loss of all advantages and the army's surrender, three inches long.

"Detain all those who bring in and present tallies, and if the information from the tally should leak out, execute all those who heard and told about it. These eight tallies, which only the ruler and general should secretly know, provide a technique for covert communication that will not allow outsiders to know the true situation. Accordingly, even though the enemy has the wisdom of a Sage, no one will comprehend their significance."

King Wu said: "Excellent."

25. Secret Letters

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "The army has been led deep into the territory of the feudal lords and the commanding general⁴⁷ wants to bring the troops together, implement inexhaustible changes, and plan for unfathomable advantages. These matters are quite numerous; the simple tally is not adequate to clearly express them. As they are separated by some distance, verbal communications cannot get through. What should we do?"

The T'ai Kung said: "Whenever you have secret affairs and major considerations, letters should be employed rather than tallies. The ruler sends a letter to the general; the general uses a letter to query the ruler. The letters are [composed] in one unit, then divided. They are sent out in three parts, with only one person knowing the contents. 'Divided' means it is separated into three parts. 'Sent out in three parts, with only one person knowing' means there are three messengers, each carrying one part; and when the three are compared together, only then does one know the contents. This is referred to as a 'secret letter.' Even if the enemy has the wisdom of a Sage, they will not be able to recognize the contents."

"Excellent," said King Wu.

26. The Army's Strategic Power

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "What is the Tao for aggressive warfare?"

The T'ai Kung replied: "Strategic power is exercised in accord with the enemy's movements. Changes stem from the confrontation between the two armies. Unorthodox [*ch'i*] and orthodox [*cheng*] tactics are produced from the inexhaustible resources [of the mind]. Thus the greatest affairs are not discussed, and the employment of troops is not spoken about. Moreover, words which discuss ultimate affairs are not worth listening to.⁴⁸ The employment of troops is not so definitive as to be visible. They go suddenly, they come suddenly. Only someone who can exercise sole control, without being governed by other men, is a military weapon.

"If [your plans]⁴⁹ are heard about, the enemy will make counterplans. If you are perceived, they will plot against you. If you are known, they will put you in difficulty. If you are fathomed, they will endanger you.

"Thus one who excels in warfare does not await the deployment of forces. One who excels at eliminating the misfortunes of the people manages them before they appear. Conquering the enemy means being victorious over the

formless.⁵⁰ The superior fighter does not engage in battle. Thus one who fights and attains victory in front of naked blades is not a good general. One who makes preparations after [the battle] has been lost is not a Superior Sage! One whose skill is the same as the masses is not a State Artisan.

"In military affairs nothing is more important than certain victory. In employing the army nothing is more important than obscurity and silence. In movement nothing is more important than the unexpected. In planning nothing is more important than not being knowable.

"To be the first to gain victory, initially display some weakness to the enemy and only afterward do battle. Then your effort will be half, but the achievement will be doubled.

"The Sage takes his signs from the movements of Heaven and Earth; who knows his principles? He accords with the Tao of yin and yang and follows their seasonal activity. He follows the cycles of fullness and emptiness of Heaven and Earth, taking them as his constant. All things have life and death in accord with the form of Heaven and Earth. Thus it is said that if one fights before seeing the situation, even if he is more numerous, he will certainly be defeated.

"One who excels at warfare will await events in the situation without making any movement. When he sees he can be victorious, he will arise; if he sees he cannot be victorious, he will desist. Thus it is said he does not have any fear, he does not vacillate. Of the many harms that can beset an army, vacillation is the greatest. Of disasters that can befall an army, none surpasses doubt.

"One who excels in warfare will not lose an advantage when he perceives it or be doubtful when he meets the moment. One who loses an advantage or lags behind the time for action will, on the contrary, suffer from disaster. Thus the wise follow the time and do not lose an advantage; the skillful are decisive and have no doubts. For this reason when there is a sudden clap of thunder, there is not time to cover the ears; when there is a flash of lightning, there is not time to close the eyes. Advance as if suddenly startled; employ your troops as if deranged.⁵¹ Those who oppose you will be destroyed; those who come near will perish. Who can defend against such an attack?

"Now when matters are not discussed and the general preserves their secrecy, he is spirit-like. When things are not manifest but he discerns them, he is enlightened. Thus if one knows the Tao of spirit and enlightenment, no enemies will act against him in the field, nor will any state stand against him."

"Excellent," said King Wu.

27. The Unorthodox Army

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung, "In general, what are the great essentials in the art of employing the army?"

The T'ai Kung replied: "The ancients who excelled at warfare were not able to wage war above Heaven, nor could they wage war below Earth.⁵² Their success and defeat in all cases proceeded from the spiritual employment of strategic power [*shih*]. Those who attained it flourished; those who lost it perished.

"Now when our two armies, opposing each other, have deployed their armored soldiers and established their battle arrays, releasing some of your troops to create chaos in the ranks is the means by which to fabricate deceptive changes.

"Deep grass and dense growth are the means by which to effect a concealed escape.

"Valleys with streams and treacherous ravines are the means by which to stop chariots and defend against cavalry.

"Narrow passes and mountain forests are the means by which a few can attack a large force.

"Marshy depressions and secluded dark areas are the means by which to conceal your appearance.

"[Deploying] on clear, open ground without any concealment is the means by which to fight with strength and courage.⁵³

"Being as swift as a flying arrow, attacking as suddenly as the release of a crossbow are the means by which to destroy brilliant plans.

"Setting up ingenious ambushes and preparing unorthodox troops, stretching out distant formations to deceive and entice the enemy are the means by which to destroy the enemy's army and capture its general.

"Dividing your troops into four and splitting them into five are the means by which by attack their circular formations and destroy their square ones.

"Taking advantage of their fright and fear is the means by which one can attack ten.

"Taking advantage of their exhaustion and encamping at dusk are the means by which ten can attack one hundred.

"Unorthodox technical skills are the means by which to cross deep waters and ford rivers.

"Strong crossbows and long weapons are the means by which to fight across water.

"Distant observation posts and far-off scouts, explosive haste and feigned retreats are the means by which to force the surrender of walled fortifications and compel the submission of towns.

"Drumming an advance and setting up a great tumult are the means by which to implement unorthodox plans.

"High winds and heavy rain are the means by which to strike the front and seize the rear.

"Disguising some men as enemy emissaries is the means by which to sever their supply lines.

"Forging [enemy] commands and orders and wearing the same clothes as the enemy are the means by which to be prepared for their retreat.

"Warfare which is invariably in accord with righteousness is the means by which to incite the masses and be victorious over the enemy.

"Honored ranks and generous rewards are the means by which to encourage obeying orders.

"Severe punishments and heavy fines are the means by which to force the weary and indolent to advance.

"Happiness and anger, bestowing and taking away, civil and martial measures, at times slowly, at others rapidly—all these are the means by which to order and harmonize the Three Armies, to govern and unify subordinates.

"Occupying high ground is the means by which to be alert and assume a defensive posture.

"Holding defiles and narrows is the means by which to be solidly entrenched.

"Mountain forests and dense growth are the means by which to come and go silently.

"Deep moats, high ramparts, and large reserves of supplies are the means by which to sustain your position for a long time.

"Thus it is said, 'One who does not know how to plan for aggressive warfare cannot be spoken with about the enemy. One who cannot divide and move [his troops about] cannot be spoken with about unorthodox strategies.'⁵⁴ One who does not have a penetrating understanding of both order and chaos cannot be spoken with about changes.'

"Accordingly it is said:

"If the general is not benevolent, then the Three Armies will not be close to him.

"If the general is not courageous, then the Three Armies will not be fierce.

"If the general is not wise, then the Three Armies will be greatly perplexed.

"If the general is not perspicacious, then the Three Armies will be confounded.

"If the general is not quick-witted and acute, then the Three Armies will lose the moment."⁵⁵

"If the general is not constantly alert, the Three Armies will waste their preparations.

"If the general is not strong and forceful, then the Three Armies will fail in their duty."

"Thus the general is their Master of Fate. The Three Armies are ordered with him, and they are disordered with him. If one obtains a Worthy to serve as general, the army will be strong and the state will prosper. If one does not obtain a Worthy as general, the army will be weak and the state will perish."

"Excellent," said King Wu.

28. The Five Notes

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "From the sound of the pitch pipes, can we know the fluctuations of the Three Armies, foretell victory and defeat?"

The T'ai Kung said: "Your question is profound indeed! Now there are twelve pipes, with five major notes: *kung*, *shang*, *chiao*, *cheng*, and *yü*.⁵⁶ These are the true, orthodox sounds, unchanged for over ten thousand generations.

"The spirits of the five phases are constants of the Tao.⁵⁷ Metal, wood, water, fire, and earth—each according to their conquest relationship—[can be employed to] attack the enemy. In antiquity, during the period of the Three Sage Emperors, they used the nature of vacuity and non-action to govern the hard and strong. They didn't have characters for writing; everything proceeded from the five phases. The Tao of the five phases is the naturalness of Heaven and Earth. The division into the six *chia*⁵⁸ is [a realization] of marvelous and subtle spirit.

"Their method was, when the day had been clear and calm—without any clouds, wind, or rain—to send light cavalry out in the middle of the night to approach the enemy's fortifications. Stopping about nine hundred paces away, they would all lift their pipes to their ears and then yell out to startle the enemy. There would be a very small, subtle sound that would respond in the pitch pipes.

"If the *chiao* note responded among the pipes, it indicated a white tiger.

"If the *cheng* note responded in the pipes, it indicated the Mysterious Military.

"If the *shang* note responded in the pipes, it indicated the Vermillion Bird.

"If you *yü* note responded in the pipes, it indicated the Hooked Formation.

"If none of the five notes responded in the pipes, it was *kung*, signifying a Green Dragon.

"These signs of the five phases are evidence to assist in the conquest, the subtle moments of success and defeat."

"Excellent," said King Wu.

The T'ai Kung continued: "These subtle, mysterious notes all have external indications."

"How can we know them?" King Wu asked.

The T'ai Kung replied: "When the enemy has been startled into movement, listen for them. If you hear the sound of the *pao* drum, then it is *chiao*. If you see the flash of lights from a fire, then it is *cheng*. If you hear the sounds of bronze and iron, of spears and halberds, then it is *shang*. If you hear the sound of people sighing, it is *yü*. If all is silent, without any sound, then it is *kung*. These five are the signs of sound and appearance."

29. The Army's Indications

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "Before engaging in battle I want to first know the enemy's strengths and weaknesses, to foresee indications of victory or defeat. How can this be done?"

The T'ai Kung replied: "Indications of victory or defeat will be first manifest in their spirit. The enlightened general will investigate them, for they will be evidenced in the men.

"Clearly observe the enemy's coming and going, advancing and withdrawing. Investigate his movements and periods at rest, whether they speak about portents, what the officers and troops report. If the Three Armies are exhilarated [and] the officers and troops fear the laws; respect the general's commands; rejoice with each other in destroying the enemy; boast to each other about their courage and ferocity; and praise each other for their awesomeness and martial demeanor—these are indications of a strong enemy.

"If the Three Armies have been startled a number of times, the officers and troops no longer maintaining good order; they terrify each other [with stories about] the enemy's strength; they speak to each other about the disadvantages; they anxiously look about at each other, listening carefully; they talk incessantly of ill omens, myriad mouths confusing each other; they fear neither laws nor orders and do not regard their general seriously—these are indications of weakness.

"When the Three Armies are well ordered; the deployment's strategic configuration of power solid—with deep moats and high ramparts—and moreover they enjoy the advantages of high winds and heavy rain; the army is untroubled; the signal flags and pennants point to the front; the sound of the gongs and bells rises up and is clear; and the sound of the small and large drums clearly rises—these are indications of having obtained spiritual, enlightened assistance, foretelling a great victory.

"When their formations are not solid; their flags and pennants confused and entangled with each other; they go contrary to the advantages of high wind and heavy rain; their officers and troops are terrified; and their *ch'i* broken while they are not unified; their war horses have been frightened and run off, their military chariots have broken axles; the sound of their gongs and bells sinks down and is murky; the sound of their drums is wet and damp—these are indications foretelling a great defeat.

"In general, when you attack city walls or surround towns, if the color of their *ch'i* is liked dead ashes, the city can be slaughtered.⁵⁹ If the city's *ch'i* drifts out to the north, the city can be conquered. If the city's *ch'i* goes out and drifts to the west, the city can be forced to surrender. If the city's *ch'i* goes out and drifts to the south, it cannot be taken. If the city's *ch'i* goes out and drifts to the east, the city cannot be attacked. If the city's *ch'i* goes out but then drifts back in, the city's ruler has already fled. If the city's *ch'i* goes out and overspreads our army, the soldiers will surely fall ill. If the city's *ch'i* goes out and just rises up without any direction,⁶⁰ the army will have to be employed for a long time. If, when you have attacked a walled city or surrounded a town for more than ten days without thunder or rain, you must hastily abandon it, for the city must have a source of great assistance.

"Those are the means by which to know that you can attack and then go on to mount the attack, or that you should not attack and therefore stop."

"Excellent," said King Wu.

30. Agricultural Implements

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "If All under Heaven are at peace and settled, while the state is not engaged in any conflicts, can we dispense with maintaining the implements of war? Can we forego preparing equipment for defense?"

The T'ai Kung said: "The implements for offense and defense are fully found in ordinary human activity. Digging sticks serve as *chevaux-de-frise* and caltrops. Oxen and horse-pulled wagons can be used in the encampment and as covering shields. The different hoes can be used as spears and spear-

tipped halberds. Raincoats of straw and large umbrellas serve as armor and protective shields. Large hoes, spades, axes, saws, mortars, and pestles are tools for attacking walls. Oxen and horses are the means to transport provisions. Chickens and dogs serve as lookouts. The cloth that women weave serves as flags and pennants.

"The method that the men use for leveling the fields is the same for attacking walls. The skill needed in spring to cut down grass and thickets is the same as needed for fighting against chariots and cavalry. The weeding methods used in summer are the same as used in battle against foot soldiers. The grain harvested and the firewood cut in the fall will be provisions for the military. In the winter well-filled granaries and storehouses will ensure a solid defense.

"The units of five found in the fields and villages will provide the tallies and good faith that bind the men together. The villages have officials and the offices have chiefs who can lead the army. The villages have walls surrounding them, which are not crossed; they provide the basis for the division into platoons. The transportation of grain and the cutting of hay provide for the state storehouses and armories. The skills used in repairing the inner and outer walls in the spring and fall, in maintaining the moats and channels are used to build ramparts and fortifications.

"Thus the tools for employing the military are completely found in ordinary human activity. One who is good at governing a state will take them from ordinary human affairs. Then they must be made to accord with the good management of the six animals,⁶¹ to the opening up of wild lands, and the settling of the people where they dwell. The husband has a number of acres that he farms, the wife a measured amount of material to weave—this is the Way to enrich the state and strengthen the army."

"Excellent," said King Wu.

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IV

TIGER SECRET TEACHING

31. The Army's Equipment

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "When the king mobilizes the Three Armies, are there any rules for determining the army's equipment, such as the implements for attack and defense, including type and quantity?"

The T'ai Kung said: "A great question, my king! The implements for attack and defense each have their own categories. This results in the great awesomeness of the army."⁶²

King Wu said: "I would like to hear about them."

The T'ai Kung replied: "As for the basic numbers when employing the army, if commanding ten thousand armed soldiers the rules for [the various types of equipment and their] employment are as follows.

"Thirty-six Martial Protective Large *Fu-hsü* Chariots. Skilled officers, strong crossbowmen, spear bearers, and halberdiers—total of twenty-four for each flank [and the rear].⁶³ The chariots have eight-foot wheels. On it are set up pennants and drums which, according to the Art of War, are referred to as 'Shaking Fear.' They are used to penetrate solid formations, to defeat strong enemies.

"Seventy-two Martial-Flanking Large Covered Spear and Halberd *Fu-hsü* Chariots.⁶⁴ Skilled officers, strong crossbowmen, spear bearers, and halberdiers comprise the flanks. They have five-foot wheels and winch-powered linked crossbows which fire multiple arrows for self-protection.⁶⁵ They are used to penetrate solid formations and defeat strong enemies.

"One hundred and forty Flank-supporting Small Covered *Fu-hsü* Chariots equipped with winch-powered linked crossbows to fire multiple arrows for self-protection. They have deer wheels and are used to penetrate solid formations and defeat strong enemies.

"Thirty-six Great Yellow Triple-linked Crossbow Large *Fu-hsü* Chariots. Skilled officers, strong crossbowmen, spear bearers, and halberdiers com-

prise the flanks, with 'flying duck' and 'lightning's shadow' arrows for self-protection. 'Flying duck' arrows have red shafts and white feathers, with bronze arrowheads. 'Lightning's shadow' arrows have green shafts and red feathers, with iron heads.⁶⁶ In the daytime they display pennants of red silk six feet long by six inches wide, which shimmer in the light. At night they hang pennants of white silk, also six feet long by six inches wide, which appear like meteors. They are used to penetrate solid formations, to defeat infantry and cavalry.

"Thirty-six Great *Fu-hsü* Attack Chariots.⁶⁷ Carrying Praying Mantis Martial warriors, they can attack both horizontal and vertical formations and can defeat the enemy.

"Baggage Chariots [for repelling] mounted invaders, also called 'Lightning Chariots.' The Art of War refers to their use in 'lightning attacks.'⁶⁸ They are used to penetrate solid formations, to defeat both infantry and cavalry.

"One hundred and sixty Spear and Halberd *Fu-hsü* Light Chariots [for repelling] night invaders from the fore. Each carries three Praying Mantis Martial knights. The Art of War refers to them as mounting 'thunder attacks.' They are used to penetrate solid formations, to defeat both infantry and cavalry.

"Iron truncheons with large square heads weighing twelve catties, and shafts more than five feet long, twelve hundred of them. Also termed 'Heaven's Truncheon.'

"The Great Handle *Fu* Ax with an eight-inch blade, weighing eight catties, and a shaft more than five feet long, twelve hundred of them. Also termed 'Heaven's *Yüeh* Ax.'

"Also the Iron Square-headed Pounder, weighing eight catties, with a shaft of more than five feet, twelve hundred. Also termed 'Heaven's Pounder.' They are used to defeat infantry and hordes of mounted invaders.

"The Flying Hook, eight inches long. The curve of the hook is five inches long, the shaft is more than six feet long. Twelve hundred of them. They are thrown into masses of soldiers.

"To defend the Three Armies deploy *Fu-hsü* [chariots] equipped with wooden Praying Mantises and sword blades, each twenty feet across, altogether one hundred and twenty of them. They are also termed *chevaux-de-frise*.⁶⁹ On open, level ground the infantry can use them to defeat chariots and cavalry.

"Wooden caltrops which stick out of the ground about two feet five inches, one hundred twenty. They are employed to defeat infantry and cavalry, to urgently press the attack against invaders, and to intercept their flight.⁷⁰

"Short-axle Quick-turning Spear and Halberd *Fu-hsü* Chariots, one hundred twenty. They were employed by the Yellow Emperor to vanquish Ch'ih-yu. They are used to defeat both infantry and cavalry, to urgently press the attack against the invaders, and to intercept their flight.

"For narrow roads and small bypaths, set out iron caltrops eight inches wide, having hooks four inches high and shafts of more than six feet, twelve hundred. They are for defeating retreating⁷¹ cavalry.

"If, in the darkness of night the enemy should suddenly press an attack and the naked blades clash, stretch out a ground net and spread out two arrowheaded caltrops connected together with 'weaving women'-type caltrops on both sides. The points of the blades should be about two feet apart. Twelve thousand sets.

"For fighting in wild expanses and in the middle of tall grass, there is the square-shank, arrow-shaped spear, twelve hundred of them. The method for deploying these spears is to have them stick out of the ground one foot five inches. They are used to defeat infantry and cavalry, to urgently press the attack against invaders, and to intercept their flight.

"On narrow roads, small bypaths, and constricted terrain, set out iron chains, one hundred twenty of them, to defeat infantry and cavalry, urgently press the attack against the invaders, and intercept their flight.

"For the protection and defense of the gates to fortifications, there are small [mobile] shields with spear and halberd [tips affixed], twelve of them, and winch-driven, multiple arrow crossbows for self-protection.⁷²

"For the protection of the Three Armies, there are Heaven's Net and Tiger's Drop, linked together with chains, one hundred twenty of them. One array is fifteen feet wide and eight feet tall. For the *Fu-hsü* [chariot] with Tiger's Drop and sword blades affixed, the array is fifteen feet wide and eight feet tall. Five hundred ten of them.

"For crossing over moats and ditches, there is the Flying Bridge. One section is fifteen feet wide and more than twenty feet long. Eight of them.⁷³ On top there are swivel winches to extend them by linked chains.⁷⁴

"For crossing over large bodies of water, there is the Flying River, eight of them. They are fifteen feet wide and more than twenty feet long and are extended by linked chains.

"There is also the Heavenly Float with Iron Praying Mantis, rectangular inside, circular outside, four feet or more in diameter, equipped with plantern winches. Thirty-two of them. When the Heavenly Floats are used to deploy the Flying River to cross a large lake, they are referred to as 'Heaven's Huang' and also termed 'Heaven's Boat.'

"When in mountain forests or occupying the wilds, connect the Tiger's Drops to make a fenced encampment. [Employ] iron chains, length of more

than twenty feet, twelve hundred sets. [Also employ] large ropes with rings,⁷⁵ girth of four inches, length of more than forty feet, six hundred; mid-sized ropes with rings, girth of two inches, length of forty feet or more, two hundred sets; and small braided cords with rings, length of twenty feet or more, twelve thousand.

"Wooden canopies for covering the heavy chariots, called 'Heaven's Rain,' which fit together along serrated seams, each four feet wide and more than four feet long, one for each chariot. They are erected by using small iron posts.

"For cutting trees there is the Heavenly Ax, which weighs eight catties. Its handle is more than three feet long. Three hundred of them. Also the mattock with a blade six inches wide and a shaft more than five feet long, three hundred.

"Copper rams for pounding, more than five feet long, three hundred.

"Eagle claws with square hafts, iron handles, and shafts more than seven feet long, three hundred.

"Square-shafted iron pitchforks with handles more than seven feet long, three hundred.

"Square-shafted double-pronged iron pitchforks with shafts more than seven feet long, three hundred.

"Large sickles for cutting grass and light trees with shafts more than seven feet long, three hundred.

"Great oar-shaped blades, weight of eight catties, with shafts more than six feet long, three hundred.

"Iron stakes with rings affixed at top, more than three feet long, three hundred.

"Large hammers for pounding posts, weight of five catties, handles more than two feet long, one hundred twenty.

"Armored soldiers, ten thousand. Strong crossbowmen, six thousand. Halberdiers with shields, two thousand. Spearmen with shields, two thousand. Skilled men to repair offensive weapons and sharpen them, three hundred.

"These then are the general numbers required for each category when raising an army."

King Wu said: "I accept your instructions."

32. Three Deployments

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "In employing the army there are the Heavenly Deployment, the Earthly Deployment, and the Human Deployment. What are these?"

The T'ai Kung replied: "When you accord with the sun and moon, the stars, the planets, and the handle of the Big Dipper—one on the left, one on the right, one in front, and one to the rear—this is referred to as the Heavenly Deployment."⁷⁶

"When the hills and mounds, rivers and streams are similarly to your advantage to the front, rear, left, and right, this is referred to as the Earthly Deployment."⁷⁷

"When you employ chariots and horses, when you use both the civil and martial, this is referred to as the Human Deployment."⁷⁸

"Excellent," said King Wu.

33. Urgent Battles

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "If the enemy surrounds us, severing both our advance and retreat, breaking off our supply lines, what should we do?"

The T'ai Kung said: "These are the most distressed troops in the world! If you employ them explosively, you will be victorious; if you are slow to employ them, you will be defeated. In this situation if you deploy your troops into martial assault formations on the four sides, use your military chariots and valiant cavalry to startle and confuse their army, and urgently attack them, you can thrust across them."

King Wu asked: "After we have broken out of the encirclement, if we want to take advantage of it to gain victory, what should we do?"

The T'ai Kung said: "The Army of the Left should urgently strike out to the left, and the Army of the Right should urgently strike out to the right. But do not get entangled in protracted fighting with the enemy over any one road. The Central Army should alternately move to the front and then the rear. Even though the enemy is more numerous, their general can be driven off."

34. Certain Escape

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "Suppose we have led our troops deep into the territory of the feudal lords where the enemy unites from all quarters and surrounds us, cutting off our road back home and severing our supply lines. The enemy is numerous and extremely well provisioned, while the ravines and gorges are also solidly held. We must get out—how can we?"

The T'ai Kung said: "In the matter of effecting a certain escape, your equipment is your treasure while courageous fighting is foremost. If you in-

vestigate and learn where the enemy's terrain is empty and vacuous, the places where there are no men, you can effect a certain escape.

"Order your generals and officers to carry the Mysterious Dark Pennants and take up the implements of war. Require the soldiers to put wooden gags into their mouths. Then move out at night. Men⁷⁹ of courage, strength, and swiftness, who will risk danger, should occupy the front to level fortifications and open a passage for the army. Skilled soldiers and strong crossbowmen should compose an ambushing force which will remain in the rear. Your weak soldiers, chariots, and cavalry should occupy the middle. When the deployment is complete slowly advance, being very cautious not to startle or frighten the enemy. Have the Martial Attack *Fu-hsü* Chariots defend the front and rear and the Martial Flanking Great Covered Chariots protect the left and right flanks.

"If the enemy should be startled, have your courageous, strong risk-takers fervently attack and advance. The weaker troops, chariots, and cavalry should bring up the rear. Your skilled soldiers and strong crossbowmen should conceal themselves in ambush. If you determine that the enemy is in pursuit, the men lying in ambush should swiftly attack their rear. Make your fires and drums numerous, and [attack] as if coming out of the very ground or dropping from Heaven above. If the Three Armies fight courageously no one will be able to withstand us!"

King Wu said: "In front of us lies a large body of water, or broad moat, or deep water hole which we want to cross. However, we do not have equipment such as boats and oars. The enemy has fortifications and ramparts which limit our army's advance and block off our retreat. Patrols are constantly watchful; passes are fully defended. Their chariots and cavalry press us in front; their courageous fighters attack us to the rear. What should we do?"

The T'ai Kung said: "Large bodies of water, broad moats, and deep water holes are usually not defended by the enemy. If they are able to defend them, their troops will certainly be few. In such situations you should use the Flying River with winches and also Heaven's Huang to cross the army over. Our courageous, strong, skilled soldiers should move where we indicate, rushing into the enemy, breaking up his formations, all fighting to the death.

"First of all, burn the supply wagons and provisions, and clearly inform the men that those who fight courageously will live, while cowards will die.⁸⁰ After they have broken out [and crossed the bridges], order the rear elements to set a great conflagration visible from far off.⁸¹ [The troops sallying forth] must take advantage of the cover afforded by grass, trees, hillocks, and ravines. The enemy's chariots and cavalry will certainly not dare pursue

them too far. Using the flames as a marker, the first to go out should be ordered to proceed as far as the flames and then stop, reforming a four-sided attack formation. In this fashion the Three Armies will be fervent and sharp and fight courageously, and no one will be able to withstand us."

King Wu said: "Excellent!"

35. Planning for the Army

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "Suppose we have led the army deep into the territory of the feudal lords where we encounter deep streams⁸² or water in large valleys, ravines, and defiles. Our Three Armies have not yet fully forded them when Heaven lets loose a torrent, resulting in a sudden flood surge. The rear can not maintain contact with the advance portion. We don't have equipment such as pontoon bridges, nor materials such as heavy grass to stem the waters. I want to finish crossing, to keep the Three Armies from becoming bogged down. What should I do?"

The T'ai Kung said: "If the leader of the army and commander of the masses does not first establish his plans, the proper equipment will not be prepared. If his instructions are not precise and trusted, the officers and men will not be trained. Under such conditions they cannot comprise a king's army.

"In general, when the army is involved in a major campaign, everyone [should be] trained to use the equipment. For attacking a city wall or surrounding a town there are [armored] assault chariots, overlook carts, and battering rams, while for seeing inside the walls there are 'cloud ladders' and 'flying towers.' If the advance of the Three Armies is stopped, then there are the Martial Assault Great *Fu-hsü* Chariots. For defending both front and rear, for severing roads and blocking streets, there are the skilled soldiers and strong crossbowmen who protect the two flanks. If you are encamping or building fortifications, there are the Heaven's Net, the Martial Drop, the *chevaux-de-frise*, and the caltrops.

"In the daytime climb the cloud ladder and look off into the distance. Set up five-colored pennants and flags. At night set out ten thousand fire-cloud torches, beat the thunder drums, strike the war drums and bells, and blow the sharp-sounding whistles.

"For crossing over moats and ditches there are Flying Bridges with plantern-mounted winches and cogs. For crossing large bodies of water there are [boats called] Heaven's Huang and Flying River. For going against the waves and up current there are the Floating Ocean [rafts] and the [rope-

pulled] River Severance. When the equipment to be used by the Three Armies is fully prepared, what worries will the commander-in-chief have?"

36. Approaching the Border

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "Both the enemy and our army have reached the border where we are in a standoff. They can approach, and we can also advance. Both deployments are solid and stable; neither side dares to move first. We want to go forth and attack them, but they can also come forward. What should we do?"

The T'ai Kung said: "Divide the army into three sections. Have our advance troops deepen the moats and increase the height of the ramparts, but none of the soldiers should go forth. Array the flags and pennants, beat the leather war drums, and complete all the defensive measures. Order our rear army to stockpile supplies and foodstuffs without causing the enemy to know our intentions. Then send forth our elite troops to secretly launch a sudden attack against their center, striking where they do not expect it, attacking where they are not prepared. Since the enemy does not know our real situation, they will stop and not advance."

King Wu asked: "Suppose the enemy knows our real situation and has fathomed our plans. If we move, they will be able to learn everything about us. Their elite troops are concealed in the deep grass. They press us on the narrow roads and are attacking where convenient for them. What should we do?"

The T'ai Kung said: "Every day have the vanguard go forth and instigate skirmishes with them in order to psychologically wear them out. Have our older and weaker soldiers drag brushwood to stir up the dust, beat the drums and shout, and move back and forth—some going to the left, some to the right, never getting closer than a hundred paces from the enemy. Their general will certainly become fatigued, and their troops will become fearful. In this situation the enemy will not dare come forward. Then our advancing troops will [unexpectedly] not stop, some [continuing forward] to attack their interior, others the exterior. With our Three Armies all fervently engaging in the battle, the enemy will certainly be defeated."

37. Movement and Rest

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "Suppose we have led our troops deep into the territory of the feudal lords and are confronting the enemy. The two deployments, looking across at each other, are equal in numbers and strength,

and neither dares to move first. I want to cause the enemy's general to become terrified; their officers and men to become dispirited; their battle array to become unstable; their reserve army to want to run off; and those deployed forward to constantly look about at each other. I want to beat the drums, set up a clamor, and take advantage of it so that the enemy will then run off. How can we do it?"

The T'ai Kung said: "In this case send our troops out about ten *li* from the enemy and have them conceal themselves on both flanks. Send your chariots and cavalry out about one hundred *li* [and have them return unobserved] to assume positions cutting across both their front and rear.⁸³ Multiply the number of flags and pennants, and increase the number of gongs and drums. When the battle is joined, beat the drums, set up a clamor, and have your men all rise up together. The enemy's general will surely be afraid, and his army will be terrified. Large and small numbers will not come to each other's rescue; upper and lower ranks will not wait for each other; and the enemy will definitely be defeated."

King Wu asked: "Suppose because of the enemy's strategic configuration of power [*shih*] we cannot conceal troops on the flanks, and moreover our chariots and cavalry have no way to cross behind them and assume positions to both the front and rear. The enemy anticipates my thoughts and makes preemptive preparations. Our officers and soldiers are dejected, our generals are afraid. If we engage in battle we will not be victorious. What then?"

The T'ai Kung said: "Truly a serious question. In this case five days before engaging in battle, dispatch distant patrols to observe their activities and analyze their forward movement in order to prepare an ambush and await them. We must meet the enemy on deadly ground. Spread our flags and pennants out over a great distance, disperse our arrays and formations. We must race forward to meet the enemy. After the battle has been joined, suddenly retreat, beating the gongs incessantly.⁸⁴ Withdraw about three *li* [beyond the ambush], then turn about and attack. Your concealed troops should simultaneously arise. Some should penetrate the flanks, others attack their vanguard and rear guard positions. If the Three Armies fervently engage in battle, the enemy will certainly run off."

King Wu said: "Excellent."

38. Gongs and Drums⁸⁵

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "Suppose we have led the army deep into the territory of the feudal lords where we are confronting the enemy. The weather has been either extremely hot or very cold, and it has been raining incessantly day and night for ten days. The ditches and ramparts are all col-

lapsing; defiles and barricades are unguarded; our patrols have become negligent; and the officers and men are not alert. Suppose the enemy comes at night. Our Three Armies are unprepared, while the upper and lower ranks are confused and disordered. What should we do?"

The T'ai Kung said: "In general, for the Three Armies, alertness makes for solidity, laziness results in defeat. Order our guards on the ramparts to unceasingly challenge everyone. Have all those bearing the signal flags, both inside and outside the encampment, watch each other, responding to each other's orders with countersigns, but do now allow them to make any noise. All efforts should be externally oriented."

"Three thousand men should comprise a detachment.⁸⁶ Instruct and constrain them with an oath, requiring each of them to exercise vigilance at his post. If the enemy approaches, when they see our state of readiness and alertness, they will certainly turn around. [As a result] their strength will become exhausted and their spirits dejected. [At that moment] send forth our elite troops to follow and attack them."

King Wu asked: "The enemy, knowing we are following him, conceals elite troops in ambush while pretending to continue to retreat. When we reach the ambush their troops turn back, some attacking our front, others our rear, while some press our fortifications. Our Three Armies are terrified, and in confusion fall out of formation and leave their assigned positions. What should we do?"

The T'ai Kung said: "Divide into three forces, then follow and pursue them, but do not cross beyond their ambush. When all three forces have arrived, some should attack the front and rear, others should penetrate the two flanks. Make your commands clear, choose your orders carefully. Fervently attack, advancing forward, and the enemy will certainly be defeated."

39. Severed Routes

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "Suppose we have led the army deep into the territory of the feudal lords where, confronting them, we have each assumed defensive positions. The enemy has severed our supply routes and occupied positions cutting across both our front and rear. If I want to engage them in battle, we cannot win; but if I want to maintain our position, we cannot hold out for long. What should we do?"

The T'ai Kung said: "In general, when you venture deep beyond the enemy's borders you must investigate the configuration and strategic advantages of the terrain, and concentrate on seeking out and improving the advantages. Rely on mountains, forests, ravines, rivers, streams, woods, and trees to create a secure defense. Carefully guard passes and bridges, and

moreover be certain you know the advantages of terrain conveyed by the various cities, towns, hills, and funeral mounds. In this way the army will be solidly entrenched. The enemy will not be able to sever our supply routes, nor be able to occupy positions cutting across our front and rear."

King Wu asked: "Suppose after our Three Armies have passed through a large forest or across a broad marsh and are on flat, accessible terrain, due to some erroneous or lost signal from our scouts, the enemy suddenly falls upon us. If we engage them in battle, we cannot win; if we assume a defensive position, it will not be secure. The enemy has outflanked us on both sides and occupied positions cutting across our front and rear. The Three Armies are terrified. What should be done?"

The T'ai Kung said: "Now the rule for commanding an army is always to first dispatch scouts far forward so that when you are two hundred *li* from the enemy, you will already know their location. If the strategic configuration of the terrain is not advantageous, then use the Martial Attack chariots to form a mobile rampart and advance. Also establish two rear guard armies to the rear—the further one hundred *li* away, the nearer fifty *li* away. Thus when there is a sudden alarm or an urgent situation, both front and rear will know about it, and the Three Armies will always be able to complete [their deployment into] a solid formation, never suffering any destruction or harm."

"Excellent," said King Wu.

40. Occupying Enemy Territory

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "Suppose, being victorious in battle, we have deeply penetrated the enemy's territory and occupy his land. However, large walled cities remain that cannot be subjugated, while their second army holds the defiles and ravines, standing off against us. We want to attack the cities and besiege the towns, but I am afraid that their second army will suddenly appear and strike us. If their forces inside and outside unite in this fashion, they will oppose us from both within and without. Our Three Armies will be in chaos; the upper and lower ranks will be terrified. What should be done?"

The T'ai Kung said: "In general, when attacking cities and besieging towns, the chariots and cavalry must be kept at a distance. The encamped and defensive units must be on constant alert in order to obstruct the enemy both within and without. When the inhabitants have their food cut off—those outside being unable to transport anything in to them—those within the city walls will be afraid, and their general will certainly surrender."

King Wu said: "Suppose that when the supplies inside the city are cut off—external forces being unable to transport anything in—they clandestinely make a covenant and take an oath, concoct secret plans, and then sally forth at night, throwing all their forces into a death struggle. Some of their chariots, cavalry, and elite troops assault us from within; others attack from without. The officers and troops are confused, the Three Armies defeated and in chaos. What should be done?"

The T'ai Kung said: "In this case you should divide your forces into three armies. Be careful to evaluate the terrain's configuration and then [strategically] emplace them. You must know in detail the location of the enemy's second army as well as his large cities and secondary fortifications. Leave them a passage in order to entice them to flee. Pay attention to all the preparations, not neglecting anything. The enemy will be afraid, and if they do not enter the mountains or the forests, they will return to the large towns or run off to join the second army. When their chariots and cavalry are far off, attack the front; do not allow them to escape. Since those [remaining] in the city will think that the first to go out have a direct escape route, their well-trained troops and skilled officers will certainly issue forth, with the old and weak alone remaining. When our chariots and cavalry have deeply penetrated their territory, racing far off, none of the enemy's army will dare approach. Be careful not to engage them in battle; just sever their supply routes, surround and guard them, and you will certainly outlast them.

"Do not set fire to what the people have accumulated; do not destroy their palaces or houses, nor cut down the trees at gravesites or altars. Do not kill those who surrender nor slay your captives. Instead show them benevolence and righteousness, extend your generous Virtue to them. Cause their people to say 'the guilt lies with one man.'⁸⁷ In this way the entire realm will then submit."

"Excellent," said King Wu.

41. Incendiary Warfare⁸⁸

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "Suppose we have led our troops deep into the territory of the feudal lords where we encounter deep grass and heavy growth which surround our army on all sides. The Three Armies have traveled several hundred *li*; men and horses are exhausted and have halted to rest. Taking advantage of the extremely dry weather and a strong wind, the enemy ignites fires upwind from us. Their chariots, cavalry, and elite forces are firmly concealed in ambush to our rear. The Three Armies become terrified, scatter in confusion, and run off. What can be done?"

The T'ai Kung said: "Under such circumstances use the cloud ladders and flying towers to look far out to the left and right, to carefully investigate front and rear. When you see the fires arise, then set fires in front of our own forces, spreading them out over the area. Also set fires to the rear. If the enemy comes, withdraw the army and take up entrenched positions on the blackened earth to await their assault. In the same way, if you see flames arise to the rear, you must move far away. If we occupy the blackened ground with our strong crossbowmen and skilled soldiers protecting the left and right flanks, we can also set fires to the front and rear. In this way the enemy will not be able to harm us."

King Wu asked: "Suppose the enemy has set fires to the left and right and also to the front and rear. Smoke covers our army, while his main force appears from over the blackened ground. What should we do?"

The T'ai Kung said: "In this case [assuming you have prepared a burnt section of ground], disperse the Martial Attack chariots to form a fighting barrier on all four sides, and have strong crossbowmen cover the flanks. This method will not bring victory, but will also not end in defeat."

42. Empty Fortifications

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "How can I know whether the enemy's fortifications are empty⁸⁹ or full, whether they are coming or going?"

The T'ai Kung said: "A general must know the Tao of Heaven above, the advantages⁹⁰ of Earth below, and human affairs in the middle. You should mount high and look out far in order to see the enemy's changes and movements. Observe his fortifications, and then you will know whether they are empty or full. Observe his officers and troops; and then you will know whether they are coming or going."

King Wu asked: "How will I know it?"

The T'ai Kung said: "Listen to see if his drums are silent, if his bells make no sound. Look to see whether there are many birds flying above the fortifications, if they were not startled [into flight]. If there are no vapors overhead, you will certainly know the enemy has tricked you with dummies.

"If enemy forces precipitously go off—but not very far—and then return before assuming proper formation, they are using their officers and men too quickly. When they act too quickly, the forward and rear are unable to maintain good order. When they cannot maintain good order, the entire battle disposition will be in chaos. In such circumstances quickly dispatch troops to attack them. If you use a small number to strike a large force, they will certainly be defeated."

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V

LEOPARD SECRET TEACHING

43. Forest Warfare

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "Suppose we have led our troops deep into the territory of the feudal lords where we encounter a large forest which we share with the enemy in a standoff. If we assume a defensive posture, I want it to be solid, or if we fight, to be victorious. How should we proceed?"

The T'ai Kung said: "Have our Three Armies divide into the assault formation. Improve the positions the troops will occupy, and station the archers and crossbowmen outside, with those carrying spear-tipped halberds and shields inside. Cut down and clear away the grass and trees, and extensively broaden the passages in order to facilitate our deployment onto the battle site. Set our pennants and flags out on high, and carefully encourage the Three Armies without letting the enemy know our true situation. This is referred to as 'Forest Warfare'.

"The method of Forest Warfare is to form the spear bearers and halberdiers into squads of five. If the woods are not dense, cavalry can be used in support. Battle chariots will occupy the front. When opportune, they will fight; when not opportune, they will desist. Where there are numerous ravines and defiles in the forest, you must deploy [your forces] in the Assault Formation in order to be prepared both front and rear. If the Three Armies urgently attack, even though the enemy is numerous, they can be driven off. The men should fight and rest in turn, each with their section. This is the main outline of Forest Warfare."

44. Explosive Warfare

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "Suppose the enemy's [advance forces] have penetrated deep into our territory and are ranging widely, occupying our

land, and driving off our cattle and horses. Then their Three Armies arrive en masse and press us outside our city walls. Our officers and troops are sorely afraid; our people are in bonds, having been captured by the enemy. If we assume a defensive posture, I want it to be solid, or if we fight, to be victorious. What should we do?"

The T'ai Kung said: "[An enemy] in situations such as this is referred to as an 'Explosive Force.' Their oxen and horses will certainly not have been fed; their officers and troops will have broken their supply routes, having explosively attacked and advanced. Order our distant towns and other armies to select their elite soldiers and urgently strike their rear. Carefully consult the calendar, for we must unite on a moonless night. The Three Armies should fight intensely, for then even though the enemy is numerous, their general can be captured."

King Wu said: "Suppose the enemy divides his forces into three or four detachments—some fighting with us and occupying our territory, others stopping to round up our oxen and horses. Their main army has not yet completely arrived, but they have had their swift invaders press us below the city walls. Therefore our Three Armies are sorely afraid. What should we do?"

The T'ai Kung said: "Carefully observe the enemy. Before they have all arrived, make preparations and await them. Go out about four *li* from the walls and establish fortifications, setting out in good order our gongs and drums, flags and pennants. Our other troops will comprise an ambushing force. Order large numbers of strong crossbowmen to the top of the fortifications. Every hundred paces set up an 'explosive gate,' outside of which we should place the *chevaux-de-frise*. Our chariots and cavalry should be held outside, while our courageous, strong, fierce fighters should be secreted in this outer area. If the enemy should reach us, have our light armored foot soldiers engage them in battle, then feign a retreat. Have the forces on top of the city wall set out the flags and pennants and strike the war drums, completing all preparations to defend the city. The enemy will assume we are going to defend the wall and will certainly press an attack below it. Then release the forces lying in ambush—some to assault their interior, others to strike the exterior. Then the Three Armies should urgently press the attack—some striking the front lines, others the rear. Even their courageous soldiers will not be able to fight, while the swiftest will not have time to flee. This is termed 'Explosive Warfare.' Although the enemy is numerically superior, they will certainly run off."

"Excellent," said King Wu.

45. Strong Enemy

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "Suppose we have led the army deep into the territory of the feudal lords until we are opposed by the enemy's assault forces. The enemy is numerous, while we are few. The enemy is strong, while we are weak. The enemy approaches at night—some attacking the left, others the right. The Three Armies are quaking. We want to be victorious if we choose to fight and solid if we choose to maintain a defensive posture. How should we act?"

The T'ai Kung said: "In this case we refer to them as 'Shaking Invaders.' It is more advantageous to go out and fight; you cannot be defensive. Select skilled soldiers and strong crossbowmen, together with chariots and cavalry, to comprise the right and left flanks. Then urgently strike his forward forces, quickly attacking the rear as well. Some should strike the exterior, others the interior. Their troops will certainly be confused, their generals afraid."

King Wu asked: "Suppose the enemy has blocked off our forward units some distance away and is pressing a fervent attack on our rear. He has broken up our elite troops and cut off our skilled soldiers. Our interior and exterior forces cannot communicate with each other. The Three Armies are in chaos, all running off in defeat. The officers and troops have no will to fight, the generals and commanders no desire to defend themselves. What should we do?"

The T'ai Kung said: "Illustrious is your question, my king! You should make your commands clear and be careful about your orders. You should have your courageous, crack troops who are willing to confront danger sally forth—each man carrying a torch, two men to a drum. You must know the enemy's location then strike both the interior and exterior. When our secret signals have all been communicated, order them to extinguish the torches and stop beating all the drums. The interior and exterior should respond to each other, each according to the appropriate time. When our Three Armies urgently attack, the enemy will certainly be defeated and vanquished."

"Excellent," said King Wu.

46. Martial Enemy

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "Suppose we have led the army deep into the territory of the feudal lords where we suddenly encounter a martial, numerically superior enemy. If his martial chariots and valiant cavalry attack our

left and right flanks, and our Three Armies become so shaken that their flight is unstoppable, what should I do?"

The T'ai Kung said: "In this situation you have what is termed a defeated army. Those who are skillful in employing their forces will manage a victory. Those who are not will perish."

King Wu asked: "What does one do?"

The T'ai Kung replied: "Have our most skilled soldiers and strong crossbowmen, together with our martial chariots and valiant cavalry, conceal themselves on both sides of the retreat route, about three *li* ahead and behind our main force. When the enemy pursues us, launch a simultaneous chariot and cavalry assault from both sides. In such circumstances the enemy will be thrown into confusion, and our fleeing soldiers will stop by themselves."

King Wu continued: "Suppose the enemy's chariots and cavalry are squarely opposite ours, but the enemy is numerous while we are few, the enemy strong while we are weak. Their approach is disciplined and spirited, and our formations are unable to withstand them. What should we do?"

The T'ai Kung replied: "Select our skilled soldiers and strong crossbowmen, and have them lie in ambush on both sides, while the chariots and cavalry deploy into a solid formation and assume position. When the enemy passes our concealed forces, the crossbowmen should fire en masse into their flanks. The chariots, cavalry, and skilled soldiers should then urgently attack their army—some striking the front, others striking the rear. Even if the enemy is numerous they will certainly flee."

"Excellent," said King Wu.

47. Crow and Cloud Formation in the Mountains

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "Suppose we have led the army deep into the territory of the feudal lords where we encounter high mountains with large, flat rock outcroppings on top of which are numerous peaks, all devoid of grass and trees. We are surrounded on all four sides by the enemy. Our Three Armies are afraid, the officers and troops confused. I want to be solid if we choose to defend our position and victorious if we fight. What should we do?"

The T'ai Kung said: "Whenever the Three Armies occupy the heights of a mountain, they are trapped on high by the enemy. When they hold the land below the mountain, they are imprisoned by the forces above them. If you have already occupied the top of the mountain, you must prepare the Crow and Cloud Formation.⁹¹ The Crow and Cloud Formation should be pre-

pared on both the yin and yang sides of the mountain. Some will encamp on the yin side, others will encamp on the yang side. Those that occupy the yang side must prepare against [attacks from the] yin side. Those occupying the yin side must prepare against [attacks from the] yang side. Those occupying the left side of the mountain must prepare against the right side. Those on the right, against the left. Wherever the enemy can ascend [the mountain], your troops should establish external lines. If there are roads passing through the valley, sever them with your war chariots. Set your flags and pennants up high. Be cautious in commanding the Three Armies; do not allow the enemy to know your true situation. This is referred to as a 'mountain wall.'

"After your lines have been set, your officers and troops deployed, rules and orders already issued, and tactics—both orthodox and unorthodox—already planned, deploy your assault formation at the outer perimeter of the mountain, and have them improve the positions they occupy. Thereafter, divide your chariots and cavalry into the Crow and Cloud Formation. When your Three Armies urgently attack the enemy, even though the latter are numerous, their general can be captured."

48. Crow and Cloud Formation in the Marshes

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "Suppose we have led the army deep into the territory of the feudal lords where we are confronting the enemy across a river. The enemy is well equipped and numerous; we are impoverished and few. If we cross the water to attack, we will not be able to advance; while if we want to outlast them, our supplies are too few. We are encamped on salty ground. There are no towns in any direction and moreover no grass or trees. There is nothing the Three Armies can plunder, while the oxen and horses have neither fodder nor a place to graze. What should we do?"

The T'ai Kung said: "The Three Armies are unprepared; the oxen and horses have nothing to eat; the officers and troops have no supplies. In this situation seek some opportunity to trick the enemy and quickly get away, setting up ambushes to your rear."

King Wu said: "The enemy cannot be deceived. My officers and troops are confused. The enemy has occupied positions cutting across both our front and rear. Our Three Armies are defeated and in flight. What then?"

The T'ai Kung said: "When you are searching for an escape route, gold and jade are essential. You must obtain intelligence from the enemy's emissaries. In this case cleverness and secrecy are your treasures."

King Wu said: "Suppose the enemy knows I have laid ambushes, so their main army is unwilling to cross the river. The general of their second army then breaks off some units and dispatches them to ford the river. My Three Armies are sorely afraid. What should I do?"

The T'ai Kung said: "In this situation divide your troops into assault formations, and have them improve their positions. Wait until all the enemy's troops have emerged, then spring your concealed troops, rapidly striking their rear. Have your strong crossbowmen on both sides shoot into their left and right flanks. Divide your chariots and cavalry into the Crow and Cloud Formation, arraying them against their front and rear. Then your Three Armies should vehemently press the attack. When the enemy sees us engaged in battle, their main force will certainly ford the river and advance. Then spring the ambushing forces, urgently striking their rear. The chariots and cavalry should assault the left and right. Even though the enemy is numerous, they can be driven off.

"In general, the most important thing in employing your troops is that when the enemy approaches to engage in battle, you must deploy your assault formations and have them improve their positions. Thereafter, divide your chariots and cavalry into the Crow and Cloud Formation. This is the unorthodox in employing your troops. What is referred to as the Crow and Cloud Formation is like the crows dispersing and the clouds forming together. Their changes and transformations are endless."⁹²

"Excellent," said King Wu.

49. The Few and the Many

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "If I want to attack a large number with only a few, attack the strong with the weak, what should I do?"

The T'ai Kung said: "If you want to attack a large number with only a few, you must do it at sunset, setting an ambush in tall grass, pressing them on a narrow road. To attack the strong with the weak, you must obtain the support of a great state and the assistance of neighboring states."

King Wu asked: "We do not have any terrain with tall grass, and moreover there are no narrow roads. The enemy has already arrived; we cannot wait until sunset. I do not have the support of any great state nor furthermore the assistance of neighboring states. What then?"

The T'ai Kung said: "You should set out specious arrays and false enticements to dazzle and confuse their general, to redirect his path so that he will be forced to pass tall grass. Make his route long so you can arrange your engagement for sunset. When his advance units have not yet finished crossing

the water, his rear units have not yet reached the encampment, spring our concealed troops, vehemently striking his right and left flanks, while your chariots and cavalry stir chaos among his forward and rear units. Even if the enemy is numerous, they will certainly flee.

"To serve the ruler of a great state, to gain the submission of the officers of neighboring states, make their gifts generous and speak extremely deferentially. In this fashion you will obtain the support of a great state and the assistance of neighboring states."

"Excellent," said King Wu.

50. Divided Valleys

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "Suppose we have led the army deep into the territory of the feudal lords where we encounter the enemy in the midst of a steep valley. I have mountains on our left, water on the right. The enemy has mountains on the right, water on the left."⁹³ They divide the valley with us in a standoff. If we choose to defend our position, I want to be solid, and victorious if we want to fight. How should we proceed?"

The T'ai Kung said: "If you occupy the left side of a mountain, you must urgently prepare [against an attack from the] right side. If you occupy the right side of a mountain, then you should urgently prepare [against an attack from the] left. If the valley has a large river but you do not have boats and oars, you should use the Heaven's Huang⁹⁴ to cross the Three Armies over. Those that have crossed should widen the road considerably in order to improve your fighting position. Use the Martial Assault chariots at the front and rear; deploy your strong crossbowmen into ranks; and solidify all your lines and formations. Employ the Martial Assault chariots to block off all the intersecting roads and entrances to the valley. Set your flags out on high ground. This posture is referred to as an 'Army Citadel.'

"In general, the method for valley warfare is for the Martial Assault chariots to be in the forefront and the Large Covered chariots to act as a protective force. Your skilled soldiers and strong crossbowmen should cover the left and right flanks. Three thousand men will comprise one detachment, which must be deployed in the assault formation. Improve the positions the soldiers occupy. Then the Army of the Left should advance to the left, the Army of the Right to the right, and the Army of the Center to the front—all attacking and advancing together. Those that have already fought should return to their detachment's original positions, the units fighting and resting in succession until you have won."

"Excellent," said King Wu.

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VI

CANINE SECRET TEACHING

51. Dispersing and Assembling

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "If the king, leading the army, has dispersed the Three Armies to several locations and wants to have them reassemble at a specific time for battle, how should he constrain them with oaths, rewards, and punishments so that he can achieve it?"

The T'ai Kung said: "In general, the Way to employ the military, the masses of the Three Armies, must be to have the changes of dividing and reuniting.⁹⁵ The commanding general should first set the place and day for battle, then issue full directives and particulars to the generals and commanders setting the time, indicating whether to attack cities or besiege towns, and where each should assemble. [He should] clearly instruct them about the day for battle and even the quarter hour by the water clock. The commanding general should then establish his encampment, array his battle lines, put up a gnomon and the official gate, clear the road, and wait. When all the generals and commanders have arrived, compare their arrival [with the designated time]. Those who arrived before the appointed time should be rewarded. Those who arrived afterward should be executed. In this way both the near and distant will race to assemble, and the Three Armies will arrive together, uniting their strength to engage in the battle."

52. Military Vanguard

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "In general, when employing the army it is essential to have military chariots, courageous cavalry, a first-assault wave, a hand-picked vanguard, and then a perceived opportunity to strike the enemy. In which situations can we strike?"

The T'ai Kung said: "Anyone who wants to launch a strike should carefully scrutinize and investigate fourteen changes in the enemy. When [any of]

these changes becomes visible, attack, for the enemy will certainly be defeated."

King Wu asked: "May I hear about these fourteen changes?"

The T'ai Kung said: "When the enemy has begun to assemble they can be attacked.

"When the men and horses have not yet been fed they can be attacked.

"When the seasonal or weather conditions are not advantageous to them they can be attacked.

"When they have not secured good terrain they can be attacked.

"When they are fleeing they can be attacked.

"When they are not vigilant they can be attacked.

"When they are tired and exhausted they can be attacked.

"When the general is absent from the officers and troops they can be attacked.

"When they are traversing long roads they can be attacked.

"When they are fording rivers they can be attacked.

"When the troops have not had any leisure time they can be attacked.

"When they encounter the difficulty of precipitous ravines or are on narrow roads they can be attacked.

"When their battle array is in disorder they can be attacked.

"When they are afraid they can be attacked."

53. Selecting Warriors

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "What is the Way to select warriors?"

The T'ai Kung replied: "Within the army there will be men with great courage and strength who are willing to die and even take pleasure in suffering wounds. They should be assembled into a company and called 'Warriors Who Risk the Naked Blade.'

"Those who have fierce *ch'i*, who are robust and courageous, strong and explosive, should be assembled into a company and called 'Warriors Who Penetrate the Lines.'

"Those who are extraordinary in appearance, who bear long swords and advance with measured tread in good order should be assembled into a company and called 'Courageous, Elite Warriors.'

"Those who can jump well, straighten iron hooks, are powerful, have great strength, and can scatter and smash the gongs and drums [and] destroy the flags and pennants should be assembled into a company and called 'Warriors of Courage and Strength.'

"Those who can scale heights and cover great distances, who are light of foot and excel at running should be assembled into a company and called 'Warriors of the Invading Army.'

"Those who, while serving the ruler, lost their authority and want to again display their merit should be assembled into a company and called 'Warriors Who Fight to the Death.'

"Those who are relatives of slain generals, the sons or brothers of generals, who want to avenge their deaths, should be assembled into a company and called 'Warriors Who Are Angry unto Death.'

"Those who are lowly, poor, and angry, who want to satisfy their desires, should be assembled into a company and called 'Warriors Committed to Death.'

"Adopted sons⁹⁶ and slaves, who want to cover up their pasts and achieve fame, should be assembled into a company and called the 'Incited Dispirited.'

"Those who have been imprisoned and then spared corporeal punishment, who want to escape from their shame, should be assembled into a company and called 'Warriors Fortunate to Be Used.'

"Those who combine skill and technique, who can bear heavy burdens for long distances, should be assembled into a company and called 'Warriors Awaiting Orders.'

"These are the army's selected warriors. You cannot neglect their examination."

54. Teaching Combat⁹⁷

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "When we assemble the masses of the Three Armies and want to have the officers and men assimilate and become practiced⁹⁸ in the Way for teaching combat, how should we proceed?"

The T'ai Kung said: "For leading the Three Armies you must have the constraints of the gongs and drums by which to order and assemble the officers and masses. The generals should clearly instruct the commanders and officers, explaining the orders three times—thereby teaching them the use of weapons, mobilization, and stopping, all to be in accord with the method for changing the flags and signal pennants.

"Thus when teaching the commanders and officers, one man who has completed his study of combat instructions will extend⁹⁹ them to ten men. Ten men who have completed their study of combat instructions will extend them to one hundred men. One hundred men who have completed their study of combat instructions will extend them to one thousand men. One thousand men who have completed their study of combat instructions will

extend them to ten thousand men. Ten thousand men who have completed their study of combat instructions will extend them to the masses of the Three Armies.

"When the methods of large-scale warfare are successfully taught, they will be extended to the masses of millions. In this fashion you will be able to realize a Great Army and establish your awesomeness throughout the realm."

"Excellent," said King Wu.

55. Equivalent Forces

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "When chariots and infantry engage in battle, one chariot is equivalent to how many infantrymen? How many infantrymen are equivalent to one chariot? When cavalry and infantry engage in battle, one cavalryman is equivalent to how many infantrymen? How many infantrymen are equivalent to one cavalryman? When chariots and cavalry engage in battle, one chariot is equivalent to how many cavalrymen? How many cavalrymen are equivalent to one chariot?"¹⁰⁰

The T'ai Kung said: "Chariots are the feathers and wings of the army, the means to penetrate solid formations, to press strong enemies, and to cut off their flight. Cavalry are the army's fleet observers, the means to pursue a defeated army, to sever supply lines, to strike roving forces.

"Thus when chariots and cavalry are not engaged in battle with the enemy, one cavalryman is not able to equal one foot soldier. However, after the masses of the Three Armies have been arrayed in opposition to the enemy, when fighting on easy terrain the rule is that one chariot is equivalent to eighty infantrymen, and eighty infantrymen are equivalent to one chariot. One cavalryman is equivalent to eight infantrymen; eight infantrymen are equivalent to one cavalryman. One chariot is equivalent to ten cavalrymen; ten cavalrymen are equivalent to one chariot.

"The rule for fighting on difficult terrain is that one chariot is equivalent to forty infantrymen, and forty infantrymen are equivalent to one chariot. One cavalryman is equivalent to four infantrymen; four infantrymen are equivalent to one cavalryman. One chariot is equivalent to six cavalrymen; six cavalrymen are equivalent to one chariot.

"Now chariots and cavalry are the army's martial weapons. Ten chariots can defeat one thousand men; one hundred chariots can defeat ten thousand men. Ten cavalrymen can drive off one hundred men, and one hundred cavalrymen can run off one thousand men. These are the approximate numbers."

King Wu asked: "What are the numbers for chariot and cavalry officers and their formations?"

The T'ai Kung said: "For the chariots—a leader for five chariots, a captain for fifteen, a commander for fifty, and a general for one hundred.

"For battle on easy terrain five chariots comprise one line. The lines are forty paces apart, the chariots from left to right ten paces apart, with detachments sixty paces apart. On difficult terrain the chariots must follow the roads, with ten comprising a company and twenty a regiment.¹⁰¹ Front to rear spacing should be twenty paces, left to right six paces, with detachments thirty-six paces apart. For five chariots there is one leader. If they venture off the road more than a *li* in any direction, they should return to the original road.

"As for the number of officers in the cavalry: a leader for five men; a captain for ten; a commander for one hundred; a general for two hundred.

"The rule for fighting on easy terrain: Five cavalymen will form one line, and front to back their lines should be separated by twenty paces, left to right four paces, with fifty paces between detachments.

"On difficult terrain the rule is front to back, ten paces; left to right, two paces; between detachments, twenty-five paces. Thirty cavalymen comprise a company; sixty form a regiment. For ten cavalymen there is a captain. [In action] they should not range more than one hundred paces, after which they should circle back and return to their original positions."

"Excellent," said King Wu.

56. Martial Chariot Warriors

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "How does one select warriors for the chariots?"

The T'ai Kung said: "The rule for selecting warriors for the chariots is to pick men under forty years of age, seven feet five inches¹⁰² or taller, whose running ability is such that they can pursue a galloping horse, race up to it, mount it, and ride it forward and back, left and right, up and down, all around. They should be able to quickly furl up the flags and pennants and have the strength to fully draw an eight-picul crossbow. They should practice shooting front and back, left and right, until thoroughly skilled. They are termed 'Martial Chariot Warriors.' You cannot but be generous to them."

57. Martial Cavalry Warriors

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "How do you select warriors for the cavalry?"

The T'ai Kung said: "The rule for selecting cavalry warriors is to take those under forty, who are at least seven feet five inches tall, strong and quick, who surpass the average. Men who, while racing a horse, can fully draw a bow and shoot. Men who can gallop forward and back, left and right, and all around, both advancing and withdrawing. Men who can jump over moats and ditches, ascend hills and mounds, gallop through narrow confines, cross large marshes, and race into a strong enemy, causing chaos among their masses. They are called 'Martial Cavalry Warriors.' You cannot but be generous to them."

58. Battle Chariots

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "What about battle chariots?"

The T'ai Kung responded: "The infantry values knowing changes and movement; the chariots value knowing the terrain's configuration; the cavalry values knowing the side roads and the unorthodox [*ch'i*] Way. Thus these three armies bear the same name, but their employment differs.

"In general, in chariot battles there are ten types of terrain on which death is likely and eight on which victory can be achieved."

King Wu asked: "What are the ten fatal terrains¹⁰³ like?"

The T'ai Kung replied: "If after advancing there is no way to withdraw, this is fatal terrain for chariots.

"Passing beyond narrow defiles to pursue the enemy some distance, this is terrain which will exhaust the chariots.

"When the land in front makes advancing easy, while that to the rear is treacherous, this is terrain that will cause hardship for the chariots.

"Penetrating into narrow and obstructed areas from which escape will be difficult, this is terrain on which the chariots may be cut off.

"If the land is collapsing, sinking, and marshy, with black mud sticking to everything, this is terrain which will labor the chariots.

"To the left is precipitous while to the right is easy, with high mounds and sharp hills. This is terrain contrary to [the use of] chariots.

"Luxuriant grass runs through the fields, and there are deep, watery channels throughout. This is terrain which thwarts [the use] of chariots.

"When the chariots are few in number, the land easy, and one is not confronted by enemy infantry, this is terrain on which the chariots may be defeated.

"To the rear are water-filled ravines and ditches, to the left deep water, and to the right steep hills. This is terrain on which chariots are destroyed.

"It has been raining day and night for more than ten days without stopping. The roads have collapsed so that it's not possible to advance or to escape to the rear. This is terrain which will sink the chariots.

"These ten are deadly terrain for chariots. Thus they are the means by which the stupid general will be captured and the wise general will be able to escape."

King Wu asked: "What about the eight conditions of terrain¹⁰⁴ that result in victory?"

The T'ai Kung replied: "When the enemy's ranks—front and rear—are not yet settled, strike into them.

"When their flags and pennants are in chaos, their men and horses frequently shifting about, then strike into them.

"When some of their officers and troops advance while others retreat; when some move to the left, others to the right, then strike into them.

"When their battle array is not yet solid, while their officers and troops are looking around at each other, then strike into them.

"When in advancing they appear full of doubt, and in withdrawing they are fearful, strike into them.

"When the enemy's Three Armies are suddenly frightened, all of them rising up in great confusion, strike into them.

"When you are fighting on easy terrain and twilight has come without being able to disengage from the battle, then strike into them.

"When, after traveling far, at dusk they are encamping and their Three Armies are terrified, strike into them.

"These eight constitute conditions¹⁰⁵ in which the chariots will be victorious.

"If the general is clear about these ten injurious conditions and eight victorious possibilities, then even if the enemy surrounds him on all sides—attacking with one thousand chariots and ten thousand cavalry—he will be able to gallop to the front and race to the sides and in ten thousand battles invariably be victorious."

"Excellent," said King Wu.

59. Cavalry in Battle

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "How should we employ the cavalry in battle?"

The T'ai Kung said: "For the cavalry there are ten [situations that can produce] victory and nine [that will result in] defeat."

King Wu asked: "What are the ten [situations that can produce] victory?"

The T'ai Kung replied: "When the enemy first arrives and their lines and deployment are not yet settled, the front and rear not yet united, then strike into their forward cavalry, attack the left and right flanks. The enemy will certainly flee.

"When the enemy's lines and deployment are well-ordered and solid, while their officers and troops want to fight, our cavalry should outflank them but not go far off. Some should race away, some race forward. Their speed should be like the wind, their explosiveness like thunder, so that the daylight becomes as murky as dusk. Change our flags and pennants several times; also change our uniforms. Then their army can be conquered.

"When the enemy's lines and deployment are not solid, while their officers and troops will not fight, press upon them both front and rear, make sudden thrusts on their left and right. Outflank and strike them, and the enemy will certainly be afraid.

"When, at sunset, the enemy wants to return to camp¹⁰⁶ and their Three Armies are terrified, if we can outflank them on both sides, urgently strike their rear, pressing the entrance to their fortifications, not allowing them to go in. The enemy will certainly be defeated.

"When the enemy, although lacking the advantages of ravines and defiles for securing their defenses, has penetrated deeply and ranged widely into distant territory, if we sever their supply lines they will certainly be hungry.

"When the land is level and easy and we see enemy cavalry approaching from all four sides, if we have our chariots and cavalry strike into them, they will certainly become disordered.

"When the enemy runs off in flight, their officers and troops scattered and in chaos, if some of our cavalry outflank them on both sides while others obstruct them to the front and rear, their general can be captured.

"When at dusk the enemy is turning back while his soldiers are extremely numerous, his lines and deployment will certainly become disordered. We should have our cavalry form platoons of ten and regiments of one hundred, group the chariots into squads of five and companies of ten, and set out a great many flags and pennants intermixed with strong crossbowmen. Some should strike their two flanks, others cut off the front and rear, and then the enemy's general can be taken prisoner. These are the ten [situations in which] the cavalry can be victorious."¹⁰⁷

King Wu asked: "What about the nine [situations which produce] defeat?"

The T'ai Kung said: "Whenever the cavalry penetrates the ranks of the enemy but does not destroy their formation so that the enemy feigns flight, only to turn their chariots and cavalry about to strike our rear—this is a situation¹⁰⁸ in which the cavalry will be defeated.

"When we pursue a fleeing enemy into confined ground, ranging far into their territory without stopping, until they ambush both our flanks and sever our rear—this is a situation in which the cavalry will be encircled.

"When we go forward but there is no road back, we enter but there is no way out, this is referred to as 'penetrating a Heavenly Well,'¹⁰⁹ 'being buried in an Earthly Cave.' This is fatal terrain for the cavalry.

"When the way by which we enter is constricted but the way out is distant; their weak forces can attack our strong ones; and their few can attack our many—this is terrain on which the cavalry will be exterminated.

"When there are great mountain torrents, deep valleys, tall luxuriant grass, forests and trees—these are conditions which will exhaust the cavalry.

"When there is water on the left and right, while ahead are large hills, and to the rear high mountains, and the Three Armies are fighting between the bodies of water while the enemy occupies both the interior and exterior ground—this is terrain that means great difficulty for the cavalry.

"When the enemy has cut off our supply lines, and if we advance we will not have any route by which to return—this is troublesome terrain for the cavalry.

"When we are sinking into marshy ground while advancing and retreating must both be through quagmires—this is worrisome terrain for the cavalry.

"When on the left there are deep water sluices, and on the right there are gullies and hillocks but below the heights the ground appears level—good terrain for advancing, retreating, and enticing an enemy—this terrain is a pitfall for the cavalry.

"These nine comprise fatal terrain for cavalry, the means by which the enlightened general will keep [the enemy] far off and escape and the ignorant general will be entrapped and defeated."

60. The Infantry in Battle

King Wu asked the T'ai Kung: "What about when infantry engage in battle with chariots and cavalry?"

The T'ai Kung said: "When infantry engage in battle with chariots and cavalry, they must rely on hills and mounds, ravines and defiles. The long weapons and strong crossbows should occupy the fore; the short weapons and weak crossbows should occupy the rear, firing and resting in turn. Even if large numbers of the enemy's chariots and cavalry should arrive, they must maintain a solid formation and fight intensely while skilled soldiers and strong crossbowmen prepare against [attacks from] the rear."

King Wu said: "Suppose there are no hills or mounds, ravines or defiles. The enemy arrives, and it is both numerous and martial. Their chariots and cavalry outflank us on both sides, and they are making sudden thrusts against our front and rear positions. Our Three Armies are terrified and fleeing in chaotic defeat. What should we do?"

The T'ai Kung said: "Order our officers and troops to set up the *chevaux-de-frise* and wooden caltrops, arraying the oxen and horses by units of five in their midst, and have them establish a four-sided martial assault formation. When you see the enemy's chariots and cavalry are about to advance, our men should evenly spread out the caltrops and dig ditches around the rear, making them five feet deep and wide. It is called the 'Fate of Dragon Grass.'

"Our men should take hold of the *chevaux-de-frise* and advance on foot. The chariots should be arrayed as ramparts and pushed forward and back. Whenever they stop set them up as fortifications. Our skilled soldiers and strong crossbowmen should prepare against the left and right flanks. Afterward, order our Three Armies to fervently fight without respite."

"Excellent," said King Wu.

The Methods
of the Ssu-ma

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Translator's Introduction

THE *Ssu-ma Fa* is a terse, enigmatic text dating from about the fourth century B.C. when it was probably compiled from materials dating back far into antiquity.¹ Virtually every account of its inception identifies it with the state of Ch'i, which historically was the fount of the famous military studies that received their initial impetus from the T'ai Kung, who had been enfeoffed as the first king of Ch'i a few years before his death. Traditionalists thus assert that the T'ai Kung's thoughts may form part of the early material or may have otherwise provided a foundation for the work.² Throughout the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States periods, military studies flourished in Ch'i as represented by Sun-tzu, Sun Pin, and Wei Liao-tzu; certain families (such as Sun, T'ien, and Ch'en) were particularly noteworthy. The renowned strategist Sun Pin may have been active at the time of the *Ssu-ma Fa*'s compilation and may possibly have even been a contributor; in fact, he was a distant relative of Ssu-ma Jang-chü.³ Furthermore, the style and character of the writing reportedly identify it as a product of this era, the fourth century B.C. Apart from the two books by Sun-Tzu and Sun Pin, it has traditionally been accorded far more authenticity than any of the other military writings.

The title, *Ssu-ma Fa*, might best be translated as *The Methods of the Minister of War* because the character *fa*—whose basic meaning is law—encompasses the concepts of “methods,” standards, and techniques or art, as in Sun-tzu's *Art of War*. However, no single term adequately covers the scope of the content because the *Ssu-ma Fa* discusses laws, regulations, government policies, military organization, military administration, discipline, basic values, grand strategy, and strategy.

The origin of the military title *Ssu-ma*—which literally means “the officer in charge of horses” and which, because of the horse's vital importance to the military, eventually came to designate military matters in general—remains lost in antiquity. As an official title it apparently first appeared in the earliest dynasties of the Sage Emperors, and by the Chou dynasty it had been elevated to *Ta Ssu-ma*—“Great” *Ssu-ma*, or Minister of War. Liu Yin's intro-

duction to the *Ssu-ma Fa* provides a general appraisal of the minister's role and duties under the Chou dynasty:

The Minister of War controlled the government of the dependent states, administered the Six Armies, and pacified the peripheral territories. Thus he ranked among the six chief ministers of state. When in court he assisted the Son of Heaven in administering the government; when he went out he was the chief general of the army of rectification, settling the rebellious.⁴

According to the traditional view espoused by scholars such as Liu Yin, the central content of the *Methods* played a historically important role; it was supposedly instrumental in providing guidance to Duke Huan of Ch'i (reigned mid-seventh century B.C.) in his successful quest to become hegemon (*pa*)—the military ruler of the realm—on the pretext of assisting the rightful king of the declining Chou state. It is therefore equally associated with Duke Huan's famous adviser, Kuan Chung, to whom a complex, composite work on government, philosophy, and military matters—the *Kuan-tzu*—is attributed.⁵ Subsequently, King Ching of the same state of Ch'i (who ruled from 547 to 490 B.C.) reportedly used the teachings to help him regain land previously lost to Ch'in and subjugate several feudal lords. At that time the work was untitled, but when a court assembly was convened under King Wei⁶ (reigned 378 to 342 B.C.) to gather and record all vital information on military matters, it came to be identified as *The Methods of the Minister of War*.

Another, somewhat disputed story associated with the book suggests that the famous general T'ien Jang-chü was instrumental in the great victories achieved under King Ching. Because he had held the post of *Ssu-ma* in the king's campaign, he was granted the privilege of assuming the title as a family surname. The book, when subsequently compiled under King Wei, included his ideas and thus acquired the title *Ssu-ma Jang-chü Ping-fa* (*The Military Methods of Ssu-ma Jang-chü*). His brief biography in the *Shih chi*⁷ not only records these events but also illustrates the measures he felt were necessary to wrest immediate psychological control of the troops and create the awesomeness that would command obedience:

Ssu-ma Jang-chü was a descendant of T'ien Wan.⁸ During the time of Duke Ching⁹ of Ch'i, Chin attacked [the major cities of] A and P'in,¹⁰ and Yen invaded [the river district] Ho-shang.¹¹ Ch'i's army suffered complete defeat, and Duke Ching was sorely troubled. Yen Ying then recommended Jang-chü, saying: "Even though Jang-chü is descended from T'ien's concubine, still, as a man, in civil affairs he is able to the masses, and in martial affairs he is able to overawe the enemy. I would like my Lord to test him." Duke Ching summoned Jang-chü and spoke with him about military affairs. He was greatly pleased with him and

appointed him as General of the Army to lead the soldiers in resisting the armies of Yen and Chin.

Jang-chü said: "I was formerly lowly and menial. If my Lord pulls me out from amidst my village and places me above the high officials, the officers and troops will not be submissive, and the hundred surnames will not believe in me. Since the man is insignificant and his authority [*ch'üan*] light, I would like to have one of my Lord's favored ministers, someone whom the state respects, as Supervisor of the Army.¹² Then it will be possible." Thereupon Duke Ching assented, having Chuang Ku go forth.

Jang-chü, who had already taken his leave, made an agreement with Chuang Ku, saying: "Tomorrow at midday we shall meet at the army's gate." Jang-chü raced ahead to the army, set up the gnomon,¹³ and let the water [drip in the water clock], awaiting Ku. Ku, who had always been arrogant and aristocratic, assumed that since the general had already reached the army while he was [only] the Supervisor, it was not extremely urgent. His relatives from all around, who were sending him off, detained him to drink. Midday came and Ku had not arrived. Jang-chü then lay down the standard, stopped the dripping water, and went into [the encampment]. He advanced the army [and] took control of the soldiers, clearly publicizing the constraints and bonds.¹⁴ When the constraints had been imposed it was already evening, and then Chuang Ku arrived.

Jang-chü said: "How is it that you arrive after the appointed time?" Ku acknowledged his fault, saying: "High officials and relatives saw the simple one off, thus he was detained." Jang-chü said: "On the day a general receives the mandate [of command] he forgets his home; when he enters the army and takes control of the drumsticks and urgently beats the drum he forgets himself. At present enemy states have already deeply invaded [our land]; within the state there is unrest and movement. Officers and soldiers lie brutally cut down and exposed at the borders. Our ruler does not sleep soundly nor enjoy the sweet taste of his food. The fate of the hundred surnames hangs on you, so what do you mean by being seen off?"

He summoned the provost marshal and inquired: "What is the army's law regarding those who arrive after the appointed time?" The reply: "They should be decapitated!" Chuang Ku was terrified, and he ordered a man to race back and report it to Duke Ching, asking to be saved. He had already left but not yet returned, whereupon [Jang-chü] beheaded Ku in order to publicize [the enforcement of discipline] within the Three Armies.¹⁵ All the officers within the Three Armies shook with fear.

Somewhat later the emissary that Duke Ching had dispatched, bearing a tally to pardon Ku, raced into the army. Jang-chü said: "When the general is with the army, there are orders of the ruler which are not accepted."¹⁶ He asked the provost marshal: "What is the law regarding racing into the army?" The provost marshal said: "He should be beheaded." The emissary was terrified. Jang-chü said: "We cannot slay the ruler's emissary." Then he beheaded the [emissary's]

attendant, severed the carriage's left stanchion, and beheaded the horse on the left in order to instruct the Three Armies. He dispatched the Duke's emissary to return and report and then moved [the army] out.

The officers and soldiers next encamped, dug wells, lit the cook fires, and prepared their drink and food. He asked about those with illness, had physicians prescribe medicine, and personally looked after them. In all cases when he took the emoluments of office and his rations, he presented them to the officers and troops; he himself divided all rations equally with the officers and troops. He compared the strong and weak among them¹⁷ and only after three days took control of the soldiers. The sick all sought to go on the march, fighting fervently to go into battle on his behalf. Chin's army heard of it, abandoned their position, and departed. Yen's army heard of it, crossed over the river, and dispersed. Thereupon he pursued and attacked them, subsequently retaking all the territory within the borders of the old fief, returning with the soldiers. Before he reached the state capital he disbanded the units, released them from military constraints,¹⁸ swore a covenant, and thereafter entered the city. Duke Ching and the high officials greeted him in the suburbs, rewarding the troops and completing the rites, only afterward returning to rest. After that he interviewed Jang-chü and honored him as Great Master of the Horse [*Ta Ssu-ma*]. The T'ien clan daily grew more honored in Ch'i.

* * *

After this, subordinates of the high officials Pao, Kao, and Kuo harmed him, slandering him to Duke Ching.¹⁹ Duke Ching forced Jang-chü to retire. Chü fell extremely ill and died. From this the followers of T'ien Ch'i and T'ien Pao bore a grudge against Kao, Kuo, and the others. Later [along] with T'ien Ch'ang they killed Duke Chien and completely exterminated the Kao and Kuo clans. Subsequently, Ch'ang's great-grandson T'ien Ho was thereby able to establish himself as King Wei of Ch'i. In employing the army to effect Ch'i's awesomeness he greatly imitated Jang-chü's methods, and the feudal lords all paid court to Ch'i.

King Wei of Ch'i had the high officials seek out and discuss the strategy of the ancient Ssu-mas, appending Jang-chü's [methods] within them. Thus [the book] is called the *Military Methods of Ssu-ma Jang-chü*.

* * *

The Grand Historian comments: "I have read the *Ssu-ma Ping-fa*. It is vast, expansive, deep, and far-reaching. Even the Three Dynasties, in their campaigns of rectification, still could not exhaust its meaning. Its language as well deserves some praise. [However,] how could one such as Jang-chü, commanding the army in a minor way on behalf of a small country, have the leisure to realize the *Military Methods of the Ssu-ma*? The world already has numerous copies of the *Ssu-ma Ping-fa*. For this reason I have not discussed it but have written Jang-chü's biography."

The Grand Historian's comments eventually stimulated historical doubts about Jang-chü's possible role in the book, even though the biography clearly indicates that his thoughts were merely appended among those of the early Masters of the Horse. (However, a different account found in the histories suggests that this general was evil and dissolute, hardly a figure of any merit. Any work he might have penned has subsequently been lost.²⁰) Regardless of its evolution, the book apparently assumed what was essentially its final form about the middle of the fourth century B.C.—the approximate time of Mencius's youth, more than one hundred years after the death of Confucius (551–479 B.C.), and contemporary with the probable composition of Sun-tzu's *Art of War* or perhaps Sun Pin's work.

The condition and even the authenticity of the text have been matters of scholarly debate for some centuries. Unfortunately, all editions presently available—including the one translated here from the *Seven Military Classics*—appear to be merely remnants of an original, extensive work. Only 5 chapters remain out of 155 purportedly extant in the Han dynasty,²¹ although they seem to have been faithfully transmitted since the T'ang dynasty. Ch'ing dynasty textual specialists particularly attacked the work as spurious, largely on the basis of the great discrepancy in the number of chapters and the book's failure to include all the fragments preserved in other writings and in various commentaries. However, recent studies have advanced arguments to sustain the claim that at the least, the modern text represents original material—even though much has been lost—and that the central kernel reports practices that date from before the Western Chou era supplemented by paragraphs dating from the Warring States period.²² Although further discussion must be left to the notes, if the *Shih chi* account is historically valid, the disjointed, particularized character of the individual paragraphs would be appropriate to such a book. The numerous concrete statements—all focusing on aspects of military affairs—having been rescued from the mists of time by the compilers, could never be reformed and integrated to constitute the systematized work of a single author.²³

Scope and Nature of *The Methods*

In the Later Han dynasty, Pan Ku, author of the *History of the Former Han Dynasty*, classified the *Ssu-ma Fa* under the section on *li*—"rites," or forms of propriety—when organizing his bibliographical essay. This may have been because the work was viewed as emphasizing administration, organization, and discipline rather than strategy and battlefield tactics. Within the

context of Confucianism's ascending influence and the growing domination of orthodox thought in the Later Han as well as the importance being ascribed to the major works on ritual such as the *Li chi* and *Chou li* (*Rites of Chou*, with which the *Ssu-ma Fa* has some similarities), the book may naturally have been regarded as an exposition on the military forms of the ancient dynasties—including the Early Chou—and categorized accordingly.²⁴

Even if the collected fragments are included, the *Ssu-ma Fa* cannot be considered a complete work because it rarely discusses tactics or any other aspect of battlefield command. Rather, it contains a variety of specific teachings—frequently couched in difficult, terse language—for initiating military activities, mastering military administration, and managing military campaigns. Limited discussions of strategy and tactics such as those typical of the *Six Secret Teachings* appear only in the last three chapters and are frequently passages common to the *Six Secret Teachings* or Sun-Tzu's *Art of War*. Equally absent are details about government and the implementation of moral measures, even though both are strongly advocated in the first two sections (leading to a theory that these two chapters preserve truly ancient, Sagely portions of the “original” text and the remaining three incorporate the cruder ideas of Ssu-ma Jang-chü himself).²⁵

Warfare and Fundamental Values

As a book that focuses on military administration, the *Ssu-ma Fa* naturally postulates that warfare is vital to the state and essential to pacifying the realm. According to the conceptualization of righteousness that was becoming more prevalent in this period, warfare provides the necessary means for chastising the evil and rescuing the oppressed. Moreover, despite advocating righteousness and humane government, the *Ssu-ma Fa* expresses the startling realization that the conscious exploitation of force is the foundation of political power.²⁶ As depicted from within the usual historical framework characterizing the drastic decline from Virtue, the argument runs:

In antiquity, taking benevolence as the foundation and employing righteousness to govern constituted “uprightness.” However, when uprightness failed to attain the desired [moral and political] objectives, [they resorted to] authority. Authority comes from warfare, not from harmony among men. For this reason if one must kill men to give peace to the people, then killing is permissible. If one must attack a state out of love for their people, then attacking it is permissible. If one must stop war with war, although it is war it is permissible.²⁷(1)

It should be noted that the text warns equally strongly against becoming enthralled with war: “Thus even though a state may be vast, those who love

warfare will inevitably perish. Even though calm may prevail under Heaven, those who forget warfare will certainly be endangered!”

Distinction of the Civilian and Martial Realms

Although the *Ssu-ma Fa* falls within the realist tradition, in delineating the distinction between the civilian and the martial it reflected the changing conditions of the Warring States period. Consciousness of this separation, which would become even more pronounced later in Chinese history, perhaps received impetus from the presence and growing influence of Confucian thought as popularized by the Master's true disciples and their immediate followers. In contrast to the unity of political and military functions that historically characterized the Shang and Early Chou eras, the contributors to the *Ssu-ma Fa* stressed that the military and civilian realms should be radically distinguished because of their contradictory values. The different realities are clearly perceived—perhaps emphasized—because of the growing influence of formalistic thinking about propriety and the proper forms of government that had developed extensively under the aegis of Chou civilization. As Liu Pang, founder of the Han dynasty, later discovered, he could conquer the world on horseback, but he could not maintain civilian rule without the *li* (forms of propriety) to establish his image, provide distinctions, and ensure order. The *li* created and sustained the separation necessary to elevate him above his uncouth former comrades.

Because the Chou dynasty could devote the resources necessary to nurturing intellectual pursuits during its initial period of peace and prosperity, warfare naturally became somewhat de-emphasized.²⁸ The products of peace were intellectual and formal; and although the basic martial values were never completely rejected, each realm was conceived as requiring a different orientation:

In antiquity the form and spirit governing civilian affairs would not be found in the military realm; those appropriate to the military realm would not be found in the civilian sphere. If the form and spirit [appropriate to the] military realm enter the civilian sphere, the Virtue of the people will decline. When the form and spirit [appropriate to the] civilian sphere enter the military realm, then the Virtue of the people will weaken.

In the civilian sphere words are cultivated and speech languid. In court one is respectful and courteous and cultivates himself to serve others. Unsummoned, he does not step forth; unquestioned, he does not speak. It is difficult to advance but easy to withdraw.

In the military realm one speaks directly and stands firm. When deployed in formation one focuses on duty and acts decisively. Those wearing battle armor

do not bow; those in war chariots need not observe the forms of propriety [*li*]; those manning fortifications do not scurry. In times of danger one does not pay attention to seniority. Thus the civilian forms of behavior [*li*] and military standards [*fa*] are like left and right.²⁹ (2)

The atmosphere of the court is severe, remote, and yet languid; that of the military is severe, stern, and active. The civilian atmosphere clearly stifles the martial spirit, whereas in the military the critical problem is forcing men to be active and courageous and then restraining any individual, disordered expression of these attributes.³⁰

The list of important virtues on which government should rely remains essentially unchanged: benevolence, righteousness, faith, trust, loyalty, Virtue, courage, and wisdom. However, compared with the formalistic nature of combat in the Early Chou era, the Warring States milieu demanded severity and total commitment. Yet the *Ssu-ma Fa* records and thereby advocates restraints, the latter affecting battle strategy and measures in terms of both conceptualization and actual tactics. The ideals of antiquity required that formations not be attacked before they had been completed or attacks pressed home with ruthless swiftness. Rather, reaction and restraint were stressed, with the approach being responsive rather than aggressive. This civility is sometimes explained in terms of strategic considerations, but such justifications appear weak. In contrast with the other *Seven Military Classics*, a different spirit obviously pervades the *Ssu-ma Fa*; it even affects the contributors, who clearly rose to positions of power and influence through military achievements.

Perhaps the best example of this advocacy of restraint can be seen in the rules for pursuing a fleeing enemy, which were attributed to antiquity for authenticity:

In antiquity they did not pursue a fleeing enemy more than one hundred paces or follow a retreating enemy more than three days, thereby making clear their observance of the forms of proper conduct [*li*]. They did not exhaust the incapable and had sympathy for the wounded and sick, thereby making evident their benevolence. They awaited the completions of the enemy's formation and then drummed the attack, thereby making clear their good faith. They contended for righteousness, not profit, thereby manifesting their righteousness. Moreover, they were able to pardon those who submitted, thereby making evident their courage. They knew the end, they knew the beginning, thereby making clear their wisdom. These six virtues were taught together at appropriate times, being taken as the Tao of the people's guidelines. This was the rule from antiquity. (1)

In a similar passage the ideal is again expressed in terms of the *li* but with the ostensible purpose of avoiding ambushes and entrapment.³¹ However, traces

of the new combat reality still creep in, as witnessed in such injunctions as "when following a fleeing army do not rest; if some of the enemy stop while others run off to the side, then be suspicious."

Importance of the People

As in all of the *Seven Military Classics*, the contributors stress that "aiding" the people provides the only justification for mobilizing forces. Moreover, sharing benefits while eliminating evil and hardship should be paramount among the government's objectives. Avoiding any disruption of seasonal agricultural activity must be an integral part of governmental efforts to secure the people's willing allegiance. Furthermore, military actions that might increase the suffering of the enemy's populace should also be avoided:

Neither contravening the seasons nor working the people to exhaustion is the means by which to love our people. Neither attacking a state in national mourning nor taking advantage of natural disasters is the means by which to love their people. Not mobilizing the army in either winter or summer is the means by which to love both our own people and the enemy's people. (1)

The proscription against mobilizing in winter is somewhat unusual because the fall was normally the time of military training, with campaigns extending into the winter—the season of withdrawal, death, and punishment.³²

When advancing into enemy territory, actions that might inflame the people or cause them hardship and thereby antagonize them should be severely prohibited:

When you enter the offender's territory, do not do violence to his gods; do not hunt his wild animals; do not destroy earthworks; do not set fire to buildings; do not cut down forests; do not take the six domesticated animals, grains, or implements.³³ When you see their elderly or very young, return them without harming them. Even if you encounter adults, unless they engage you in combat, do not treat them as enemies. If an enemy has been wounded, provide medical attention and return him. (1)

Because the sole justification for launching a sanctioned attack would be the eradication of governmental evil,³⁴ any expedition to chastise wrongdoers must maintain an image congruent with its defining values and teachings. Accordingly, the *Ssu-ma Fa* stresses both the ceremonial, accusatory nature of the preparatory formalities³⁵ and the vital necessity for all the soldiers' actions to be characterized by benevolence. In accord with the military writings of the age, these policies are formulated and directed toward minimizing the enemy's resistance. However, this spirit contrasts starkly with the authoritarian policies of those who advocated consciously employing warfare as

the crucial means for enriching the state as well as with the brutality witnessed throughout the Warring States period when men, including those who made the fatal mistake of surrendering rather than fighting to the death, were slaughtered by the hundreds of thousands.

Warfare: General Principles and Elements

Training Is Primary

Training men for the army entails certain problems, as indicated by this perceptive passage:

In warfare: It is not forming a battle array that is difficult; it is reaching the point that the men can be ordered into formation that is hard. It is not attaining the ability to order them into formation that is difficult; it is reaching the point of being able to employ them that is hard. It is not knowing what to do that is difficult; it is putting it into effect that is hard. Men from each [of the four quarters] have their own nature. Character differs from region to region. Through teaching they come to have regional habits, the customs of each state [thus] being different. [Only] through the Tao [Way] are their customs transformed. (4)

The two points made here are historically important. First, the ability to train men underlies their potential utilization in battle. Second, regional character differences will affect the outcome (which is why the T'ai Kung had advocated not disturbing local customs). This conscious observation of regionalism is one of the keystones of Chinese psychology, a kernel that later received extensive development.

All battlefield success results from measures previously implemented to train and prepare the troops. Once the requisite state of preparation is fully realized, factors that directly affect the battle can be considered. The general should restrict his tactics to the army's capabilities, attempt only what his men are willing to pursue,³⁶ and try to force the enemy to undertake tasks for which it is incapable and unwilling. The soldiers' armor must be stalwart; the weapons must be of good quality, intermixed, and integrated. The formations must be capable of effectively utilizing the weapons and equipment.

Movement should be controlled and never allowed to become chaotic. The proper balance between exertion and exhaustion must be struck; otherwise there is equal danger of laxity and unwillingness stemming from too much rest, or inability resulting from being overtired. Quiet and control in the midst of turbulence are the keys to victory.³⁷ Doubt must never be permitted to creep in.

The few concrete tactical suggestions that appear in the text are similar, sometimes even identical to those found in other works from the period. For example, the wise general always evaluates the enemy carefully and then attacks its weakness. He employs terrain to his advantage, such as by occupying and fortifying uphill positions, avoiding water and marshes, and being alert for ambushes when in confined areas. He should accord with Heaven, which is generally understood as consisting of the factors of climate, season, and weather but also as the auguries obtained before battle. This reflects Shang and Early Chou practices and beliefs.³⁸

Spirit and Courage

The problems of motivating men, manipulating spirit, and fostering courage command extensive attention in the *Ssu-ma Fa*, and several observations are worth abstracting from the text for systematic consideration. Virtually every military thinker in Chinese antiquity devoted a few passages to the critical problem of attaining proper commitment and nurturing courage. In simple approaches either the positive effects of rewards or the negative effects of punishments were employed singly, whereas more sophisticated thinkers offered a number of positive methods to stimulate courage and to overcome fear without the greater fear of punishment and death as the sole motivator. Righteousness, beneficence, material welfare, and freedom from oppression constituted the fundamental, positive incentives—all to be thoroughly inculcated through instruction and teaching. These need not be discussed further.

The concept of *ch'i* appears prominently in the *Ssu-ma Fa*, with much of the psychology of fear and courage being conceptualized in terms of *ch'i*. For example, in protracted conflicts courage suddenly becomes crucial:

In general, in battle one endures through strength and gains victory through spirit. One can endure with a solid defense but will achieve victory through being endangered. When the heart's foundation is solid, a new surge of *ch'i* will bring victory. (IV)

Accordingly, men who are doubtful, worried, afraid, or terrified destroy an army: "When men have minds set on victory, all they see is the enemy. When men have minds filled with fear, all they see is their fear" (4). Because the astute commander is advised to attack doubt and weakness in an enemy,³⁹ regaining control of the army's spirit is critical. Thus:

Positions should be strictly defined; administrative measures should be severe; strength should be nimble; the [soldiers'] *ch'i* should be constrained; and the minds [of the officers and people] should be unified. (4)

Among the several techniques advanced for "arousing the *ch'i*," ritual oath-taking and the final admonition of the troops ranked high in importance. Properly worded, the oath would invoke the state deities, glorify the cause, set out the objectives, condemn the enemy, and generally appeal to righteousness and similar moral values:

When the oath is clear and stimulating the men will be strong, and you will extinguish [the effects] of baleful omens and auspicious signs. ... Arouse the men's spirits with the fervor of righteousness; prosecute affairs at the right moment. (3)

The former great historical leaders apparently felt the oath would have maximum effect at particular moments, although there was considerable disagreement among them as to the appropriate timing of its administration in order to achieve the greatest psychological impact:

Shun made the official announcement of their mission within the state [capital] because he wanted the people to first embrace his orders. The rulers of the Hsia dynasty administered their oaths amidst the army for they wanted the people to first complete their thoughts. The Shang rulers swore their oaths outside the gate to the encampment for they wanted the people to first fix their intentions and await the conflict. [King Wu] of the Chou waited until the weapons were about to clash and then swore his oath in order to stimulate the people's will [to fight]. (2)

In the field, prior to a potentially decisive battle or in dire circumstances, visibly abandoning all hope of returning home and destroying supplies were commonly espoused measures, to which (as Sun-tzu also advocates) the *Methods* adds a farewell letter:

Writing letters of final farewell is referred to as "breaking off all thoughts of life." Selecting the elite and ranking the weapons is termed "increasing the strength of the men." Casting aside the implements of office and carrying only minimum rations is termed "opening the men's thoughts." (5)

In the *Ssu-ma Fa* rewards and punishments continue to provide the primary incentives and means for enforcement. The contributors accepted a version of the decline-from-Virtue theory that recognized the necessity for both rewards and punitive measures, which increased with the passage of time:

In antiquity the Worthy Kings made manifest the Virtue of the people and fully [sought out] the goodness of the people. Thus they did not neglect the virtuous nor demean the people in any respect. Rewards were not granted, and punishments were never even tried.

Shun neither granted rewards nor imposed punishments, but the people could still be employed. This was the height of Virtue.

The Hsia granted rewards but did not impose punishments. This was the height of instruction.

The Shang imposed punishments but did not grant rewards. This was the height of awesomeness.

The Chou used both rewards and punishments, and Virtue declined. ...

The Hsia bestowed rewards in court in order to make eminent the good. The Shang carried out executions in the marketplace to overawe the evil. The Chou granted rewards in court and carried out executions in the marketplace to encourage gentlemen and terrify the common man. Hence the kings of all three dynasties manifested Virtue in the same way. (2)

Conceived in terms of military prowess and the need for conquest by arms:

The rulers of the Hsia rectified their Virtue and never employed the sharp blades of their weapons, so their weapons were not mixed together. The Shang relied on righteousness, so they first used the sharpness of weapons. The Chou relied on force, so they fully utilized the sharpness of their weapons. (2)

The normal admonitions about the timely imposition of punishments and granting of rewards found in the writings of the period are included. More important is the injunction to reinforce the effectiveness of the system with bold measures when combat must again be faced. An example of this advice, which is directed toward the commander, runs as follows:

If in warfare you are victorious, share the achievement and praise with the troops. If you are about to reengage in battle, then make their rewards exceptionally generous and the punishments heavier. If you failed to direct them to victory, accept the blame yourself. If you must fight again, swear an oath and assume a forward position. Do not repeat your previous tactics. Whether you win or not, do not deviate from this method, for it is termed the "True Principle." (4)

This accords with the general policy of visibly implementing rewards and punishments right after the men have prepared for battle:

After you have aroused [people's] *ch'i* [spirit] and moreover enacted governmental measures [such as rewards and punishments], encompass them with a benign countenance, and lead them with your speeches. Upbraid them in accord with their fears; assign affairs in accord with their desires. (3)

Although most writers in the period adhere to such doctrines, the *Methods* identifies two special situations. In the first, because of the magnitude of the victory or defeat, the sheer numbers of those involved preclude using the normal approach:

Do not reward great victories, for then neither the upper nor lower ranks will boast of their achievements. If the upper ranks cannot boast they will not seem arrogant, while if the lower ranks cannot boast no distinctions will be established among the men. When neither of them boasts this is the pinnacle of deference.

In cases of great defeat do not punish anyone, for then both the upper and lower ranks will assume the disgrace falls on them. If the upper ranks reproach themselves they will certainly regret their errors, while if the lower ranks feel the same they will certainly try to avoid repeating the offense. When all the ranks divide [the responsibility for] the detestable among themselves, this is the pinnacle of yielding. (2)

In the second unusual case, the soldiers are so terrified of the enemy that neither the incentives of large rewards nor the threat of capital punishment can affect them. A radically different approach, which focuses on gaining control of their emotions through gathering the soldiers together and executing a series of set patterns or drills before swearing an oath,⁴⁰ becomes vital:

If they are terrified, then do not threaten them with execution and severe punishments but display a magnanimous countenance. Speak to them about what they have to live for, and go about supervising them in their duties. (2)

Such physical actions as crouching and sitting in a tight formation will presumably break the individual's isolation and end his continued immersion into the fear dominating his mind, permitting the commander to turn the soldier's attention outward with an inspirational harangue focusing on the righteousness of their cause, the rewards that can be attained, and the objectives of living.⁴¹ As the *Ssu-ma Fa* notes elsewhere, it is only through being endangered that men will truly exhaust their spirit and energies. Doubt and fear are the greatest enemies; but if plans have been well made, the righteousness of the cause thoroughly proclaimed, and the men well trained, the army should emerge triumphant.

Concept of Battle Management

A number of principles briefly raised by the text are worthy of notice, but they are self-explanatory and need not be discussed here. However, concepts related to engaging the enemy that appear throughout the last three chapters merit brief consideration. Those of particular importance are outlining the qualities required for leadership; the necessity for thoroughly analyzing the enemy, weighing the balance of forces, and employing those forces appropriately; avoiding being misled by minor advantages; concentrating force at the critical moment after moving forward in a more dispersed fashion; and ensuring harmony among the men. The advantages of terrain should be fully

utilized, whereas the tactical deployment of forces depends on their relative strength and character—including training, armament, and spirit. Even though an army's numbers may be few, tactics can be fashioned to preserve those numbers and even wrest a victory. The *Ssu-ma Fa* does not discuss these principles beyond the briefest indication of method, even though they are found more extensively in the other military writings. Measure and deliberate control—perhaps evidence of the antiquity of much of the material—are stressed throughout as the basis of both survival and victory. Applying psychological principles is also important; these principles include enervating the enemy's will to fight by leaving an escape path, never forcing him into the desperate circumstances that compel fighting to the death, and sowing doubt in the enemy's mind.

1. Benevolence the Foundation

In antiquity, taking benevolence as the foundation and employing righteousness to govern constituted "uprightness." However, when uprightness failed to attain the desired [moral and political] objectives, [they resorted to] authority [*ch'üan*]. Authority comes from warfare, not from harmony among men. For this reason if one must kill men to give peace to the people, then killing is permissible. If one must attack a state out of love for their people, then attacking it is permissible. If one must stop war with war, although it is war it is permissible. Thus benevolence is loved; righteousness is willingly submitted to; wisdom is relied on; courage is embraced; and credibility is trusted. Within, [the government] gains the love of the people, the means by which it can be preserved. Outside, it acquires awesomeness, the means by which it can wage war.¹

The Tao of Warfare: Neither contravening the seasons² nor working the people to exhaustion is the means by which to love our people. Neither attacking a state in national mourning nor taking advantage of natural disaster is the means by which to love their people. Not mobilizing the army in either winter or summer is the means by which to love both your own people and the enemy's people. Thus even though a state may be vast, those who love warfare will inevitably perish. Even though calm may prevail under Heaven, those who forget warfare will certainly be endangered!

When the world had attained peace the Son of Heaven had the "Ta K'ai" [Great Peace] music performed [in celebration]. Then in the spring he held the Sou hunt, and in the fall he held the Hsien hunt. In the spring the feudal lords returned their brigades in good order, while in the fall they trained their soldiers. In this way they did not forget warfare.³

In antiquity they did not pursue a fleeing enemy more than one hundred paces or follow a retreating enemy more than three days, thereby making clear their observance of the forms of proper conduct [*li*].⁴ They did not ex-

haust the incapable and had sympathy for the wounded and sick, thereby making evident their benevolence. They awaited the completion of the enemy's formation and then drummed the attack, thereby making clear their good faith. They contended for righteousness, not profit, thereby manifesting their righteousness. Moreover, they were able to pardon those who submitted,⁵ thereby making evident their courage. They knew the end, they knew the beginning, thereby making clear their wisdom. These six virtues were taught together at appropriate times, being taken as the Tao of the people's guidelines. This was the rule from antiquity.

The administrative measures of the Former Kings: They accorded with the Tao of Heaven; they established what was appropriate to Earth. They put the virtuous among the people into office, rectified names, and governed things.⁶ They established the states, defined the hierarchy of feudal positions, and apportioned emoluments according to rank. The feudal lords were pleased and embraced them. Those beyond the seas came to submit. Punishments were eliminated and the army rested. These were the attainments of Sagely Virtue.

Next came the Worthy Kings: They ordered the rites [*li*], music, laws, and measures and then created the five punishments, raising armored troops to chastise the unrighteous. They made inspection tours [of the feudal lands], investigated [the customs] of the four quarters, assembled the feudal lords, and investigated differences.⁷ If any [of the feudal lords] had disobeyed orders, disordered the constant,⁸ turned his back on Virtue, or contravened the seasons of Heaven⁹—endangering meritorious rulers—they would publicize it among all the feudal lords, making it evident that he had committed an offense. They then announced it to August Heaven and to the sun, moon, planets, and constellations. They prayed to the Gods of Earth, the spirits of the Four Seasons, mountains, and rivers and at the Great Altar [of state]. Then they offered sacrifice to the Former Kings.¹⁰ Only thereafter would the Prime Minister charge the army before the feudal lords, saying, "A certain state has acted contrary to the Tao. You will participate in the rectification campaign on such a year, month, and day. On that date the army will reach the [offending] state and assemble with the Son of Heaven to apply the punishment of rectification."

The Prime Minister and other high officials would issue the following orders to the army:

When you enter the offender's territory, do not do violence to his gods; do not hunt his wild animals; do not destroy earthworks;¹¹ do not set fire to buildings; do not cut down forests; do not take the six domesticated animals, grains, or implements. When you see their elderly or very young, return them without harming them. Even if you encounter adults, unless they engage you in combat, do not treat them as enemies. If an enemy has been wounded, provide medical attention and return him.

When they had executed the guilty, the king, together with the feudal lords, corrected and rectified [the government and customs] of the state. They raised up the Worthy, established an enlightened ruler, and corrected and restored their feudal position and obligations.

The Ways by which the kings and hegemonies governed the feudal lords were six:

With territory they gave shape to the feudal lords.¹²

With government directives they pacified the feudal lords.

With the rites and good faith they drew the feudal lords close to them.

With men of wisdom and strength they pleased the feudal lords.

Through strategists they constrained the feudal lords. With weapons and armor they forced the submission of the feudal lords.

By sharing misfortune with them, by sharing benefits¹³ with them, they united the feudal lords. They had the smaller states serve the larger ones in order to bring the feudal lords into harmony.

They assembled them in order to announce nine prohibitions:

Those who take advantage of weak [states] or encroach on sparsely populated ones will have their borders reduced on all sides.

Those who murder the Worthy or harm the people will be attacked [and deposed].

Those who are brutal within their state and encroach on others outside it will be purged.

Those whose fields turn wild and whose people scatter will be reduced.

Those who rely on the fastness [of natural advantages] to disobey orders will be invaded.

Those who harm or kill their relatives will be rectified.

Those who depose or slay their ruler will be exterminated.

Those who oppose orders and resist the government will be isolated.

Those who are chaotic and rebellious both within and without their borders, who act like animals, will be extinguished.¹⁴

2. Obligations of the Son of Heaven

The duty of the Son of Heaven must be to concentrate on modeling on Heaven and Earth and observing [the measures] of the Former Sages.¹⁵ The duty of officers and common men must be to respectfully serve their parents and to be upright with their ruler and superiors. Even though there is an enlightened ruler, if the officers are not first instructed, they cannot be used.

When the ancients instructed the people they would invariably establish the relationships and fixed distinctions of noble and common—causing them not to encroach on each other; the virtuous and righteous not to exceed each other; the talented and technically skilled not to occlude each other; and the courageous and strong not to clash with each other. Thus their strength was united and their thoughts were in harmony.

In antiquity the form and spirit governing civilian affairs would not be found in the military realm; those appropriate to the military realm would not be found in the civilian sphere.¹⁶ Thus virtue and righteousness did not transgress inappropriate realms.

Superiors valued officers who were not boastful for officers who do not boast are the greatest talents.¹⁷ If they do not boast they are not self-seeking, and if they are not self-seeking they will not be contentious. When listening to affairs of state¹⁸ superiors want to seek out their true nature, but when listening to affairs within the military they must discuss the appropriateness of matters.¹⁹ Therefore the talented and skillful cannot conceal each other. When officers follow orders they should receive the highest rewards, when they disobey orders the most severe form of execution.²⁰ Then the courageous and strong will not contend with each other.

Only after effective instructions have been provided to the people can [the state] carefully select and employ them. Only after government affairs have been thoroughly ordered can the hundred offices be sufficiently provided. When instructions are thoroughly examined the people will manifest goodness. When practice becomes habit the people will embody the customs. This is the pinnacle of transformation through education.

In antiquity they did not pursue a fleeing enemy too far or follow a retreating army too closely. By not pursuing them too far, it was difficult to draw them into a trap; by not pursuing so closely as to catch up, it was hard to ambush them. They regarded the forms of propriety [*li*] as their basic strength and benevolence as [the foundation of] their victory. After they were victori-

ous their teachings could again be employed.²¹ For this reason the true gentleman values them.

Shun made the official announcement of their mission within the state [capital] because he wanted the people to first embrace his orders. The rulers of the Hsia dynasty administered their oaths amidst the army for they wanted the people to first complete their thoughts. The Shang rulers swore their oaths outside the gate to the encampment for they wanted the people to first fix their intentions and await the conflict. [King Wu] of the Chou waited until the weapons were about to clash and then swore his oath in order to stimulate the people's will [to fight].

The rulers of the Hsia rectified their Virtue and never employed the sharp blades of their weapons, so their weapons were not mixed together.²² The Shang relied on righteousness, so they first used the sharpness of weapons. The Chou relied on force, so they fully utilized the sharpness of their weapons.²³

The Hsia bestowed rewards in court in order to make eminent the good. The Shang carried out executions in the marketplace to overawe the evil. The Chou granted rewards in court and carried out executions in the marketplace to encourage gentlemen and terrify the common man. Hence the kings of all three dynasties manifested Virtue in the same way.

When the [five types of] weapons are not intermixed, it will not be advantageous. Long weapons are for protection;²⁴ short weapons are for defending. If the weapons are too long they will be difficult to wield against others; if they are too short they will not reach the enemy. If they are too light they will be adroitly brandished, but such facility will easily lead to chaos. If they are too heavy they will be too clumsy, and if too clumsy they will not attain their objectives.

As for their war chariots, those of the rulers of the Hsia were called "hook chariots" for they put uprightness first. Those of the Shang were called "chariots of the new moon" for they put speed first. Those of the Chou were called "the source of weapons" for they put excellence first.²⁵

For flags, the Hsia had a black one at the head representing control of men. The Shang's was white for the righteousness of Heaven. The Chou used yellow for the Tao of Earth.

For insignia²⁶ the Hsia used the sun and moon, valuing brightness. The Shang used the tiger, esteeming awesomeness. The Chou used the dragon, esteeming culture.

When the army concentrates excessively on its awesomeness the people will cower, but if it diminishes its awesomeness the people will not be victorious. When superiors cause the people to be unable to be righteous, the hundred surnames to be unable to achieve proper organization, the artisans to be unable to profit [from their work], oxen and horses to be unable to fulfill their functions while the officers insult [the people]—this is termed "excessive awesomeness," and the people will cower. When superiors do not respect Virtue but employ the deceptive and evil; when they do not honor the Tao but employ the courageous and strong; when they do not value those who obey commands but instead esteem those who contravene them; when they do not value good actions but esteem violent behavior so that [the people] insult the minor officials—this is termed "diminished awesomeness." If the conditions of diminished awesomeness prevail the people will not be victorious.

A campaign army²⁷ takes measure as its prime concern so that the people's strength will be adequate. Then, even when the blades clash, the infantry will not run and the chariots will not gallop. When pursuing a fleeing enemy the troops will not break formation, thereby avoiding chaos. The solidarity of a campaign army derives from military discipline that maintains order in formation, does not exhaust the strength of men or horses, and—whether moving slowly or rapidly—does not exceed the measure of the commands.

In antiquity the form and spirit governing civilian affairs would not be found in the military realm; those appropriate to the military realm would not be found in the civilian sphere.²⁸ If the form and spirit [appropriate to the] military realm enter the civilian sphere, the Virtue of the people will decline. When the form and spirit [appropriate to the] civilian sphere enter the military realm, then the Virtue of the people will weaken.

In the civilian sphere words are cultivated and speech languid. In court one is respectful and courteous and cultivates himself to serve others. Unsummoned, he does not step forth; unquestioned, he does not speak. It is difficult to advance but easy to withdraw.

In the military realm one speaks directly and stands firm. When deployed in formation one focuses on duty and acts decisively. Those wearing battle armor do not bow; those in war chariots need not observe the forms of propriety [*li*]; those manning fortifications do not scurry. In times of danger one does not pay attention to seniority. Thus the civilian forms of behavior [*li*] and military standards [*fa*] are like inside and outside; the civil and the martial are like left and right.

. . .

In antiquity the Worthy Kings made manifest the Virtue of the people and fully [sought out]²⁹ the goodness of the people. Thus they did not neglect the virtuous nor demean the people in any respect. Rewards were not granted, and punishments were never even tried.

Shun neither granted rewards nor imposed punishments, but the people could still be employed. This was the height of Virtue.

The Hsia granted rewards but did not impose punishments. This was the height of instruction.

The Shang imposed punishments but did not grant rewards. This was the height of awesomeness.

The Chou used both rewards and punishments, and Virtue declined.

Rewards should not be [delayed] beyond the appropriate time for you want the people to quickly profit from doing good. When you punish someone do not change his position for you want the people to quickly see the harm of doing what is not good.

Do not reward great victories, for then neither the upper nor lower ranks will boast of their achievements. If the upper ranks cannot boast they will not seem arrogant, while if the lower ranks cannot boast no distinctions will be established among the men. When neither of them boasts this is the pinnacle of deference.

In cases of great defeat do not punish anyone, for then both the upper and lower ranks will assume the disgrace falls on them. If the upper ranks reproach themselves they will certainly regret their errors, while if the lower ranks feel the same they will certainly try to avoid repeating the offense. When all the ranks divide [the responsibility for] the detestable among themselves, this is the pinnacle of yielding.

. . .

In antiquity those on border duty were not required to serve [labor duty] for three years thereafter, and the ruler would personally observe the people's labor.³⁰ Upper and lower ranks recompensed each other in this fashion, which was the pinnacle of harmony.

When they had attained their aim [of pacifying the realm], they sang triumphal songs³¹ to show their happiness. They stored away the implements of war, erected the Spirit Terrace,³² and responded to the labors of the people to show that the time for rest had come.

3. Determining Rank

In general, to wage war: [First] determine rank and position; prominently record accomplishments and offenses; retain mendicant knights;³³ publicize instructions and edicts; make inquiries among the populace; seek out artisans; apply methodology to planning; fully exploit things; change [the people's] hatreds;³⁴ dispel doubts; nourish strength; search out and employ the skillful; and take action in accord with the people's hearts.

. . .

In general, to wage war: Solidify the people; analyze the advantages [of terrain]; impose order on the turbulent; [regulate] advancing and stopping; accept upright [remonstrance]; nourish a sense of shame; constrain the laws; and investigate punishments. Minor offenders should then be executed. If minor offenders are executed, how can major [offenses] arise?

. . .

Accord with Heaven; make material resources abundant; bring joy to the people; take advantage of the resources of Earth; and value military weapons. These are termed the "Five Plans." To accord with Heaven follow the seasons; to increase material resources rely on [seizing them from] the enemy. To bring joy to the people encourage and bring them into concord [with their superiors]. To take advantage of terrain defend strategic points. Valuing weapons, there are bows and arrows for withstanding attack, maces and spears for defense, and halberds and spear-tipped halberds for support.

Now each of these five weapons has its appropriate use: The long protect the short, the short rescue the long. When they are used in turn, the battle can be sustained. When they are employed all at once, [the army] will be strong. When you see [the enemy's] situation, you can be a match for it. This is termed "weighting."

. . .

A defending army should stand fast, encourage the people, and bring them into accord [with their superiors]. Only after seeing the invading enemy should it move. The general's mind is focused; the minds of the people are at one with his.

Horses, oxen, chariots, weapons, relaxation, and an adequate diet are the army's strength. Instructions are simply a matter of preparation; warfare is only a question of constraints. The army's commanding general is the body, the companies are the limbs, and the squads of five are the thumb and fingers.

In general, warfare is a question of the strategic balance of power [*ch'üan*], and combat is a matter of courage. The deployment of formations is a matter of skill. Employ what [your men] want, and effect what they are capable of; abolish what they do not want and are incapable of. Do the opposite of this to the enemy.

In general, warfare is a question of having Heaven, material resources, and excellence.

When the day and time for battle have been appropriately fixed and it is not necessary to change them; when augury by the tortoise shell presages victory; and when events proceed in a subtle, mysterious fashion, this is termed "having Heaven."

When the masses have [material resources], [the state] has them. When they thereby produce what is profitable, this is termed "having resources."

When the men are practiced in the [relative] advantages of the formations, and they fully exhaust [the strength of] things in preparation [for battle], this is referred to as "attaining excellence."

When the people are encouraged to fulfill their responsibilities, they are termed "men who take pleasure [in warfare]."

Increasing the army and making the [formations] solid; multiplying its strength and constantly training [the troops]; relying on [exploiting the strength] of things; perceiving the [nature of] things; and responding to sudden [events] are what is meant by "effecting preparations."

Fast chariots and fleet infantrymen, bows and arrows, and a strong defense are what is meant by "increasing the army." Secrecy, silence, and great internal strength are what is meant by "making formations solid." On this basis, being able to advance and being able to withdraw are what is meant by "multiplying strength." At times of little activity the upper ranks instruct [and constantly drill the lower ranks]. This is what is meant by "training [the troops] in formations." When there are appropriate offices [for both com-

mand and administration], it is termed "relying on [exploiting the strength of] things." When in accord with this things are perceived [and managed], it is referred to as "simplifying administration."

Determine the [number of] your masses in accord with the terrain, and deploy your formations in accord with the enemy. When in attacking, waging battle, defending, advancing, retreating, and stopping, the front and rear are ordered and the chariots and infantry move in concord, this is termed a well-planned campaign. If they do not follow orders; do not trust [their officers]; are not harmonious; are lax, doubtful, weary, afraid; avoid responsibility; cower; are troubled, unrestrained, deflated, or dilatory, it is termed a "disastrous campaign." When they suffer from extreme arrogance, abject terror, moaning and grumbling, constant fear, or [frequent] regrets over actions being taken, they are termed "destroyed and broken." Being able to be large or small or firm or weak, to change formations, and to use large numbers or small groups—in all respects being a match [for the enemy]—is referred to as "[exploiting] the balance of power [*ch'üan*] in warfare."

In general, to wage war: Employ spies against the distant; observe the near; act in accord with the seasons; take advantage of [the enemy's] material resources; esteem good faith; abhor the doubtful. Arouse the soldiers with fervor of righteousness. Undertake affairs at the appropriate time. Employ people with kindness. When you see the enemy, remain quiet; when you see turbulence, do not be hasty to respond. When you see danger and hardship, do not forget the masses. Within the state be generous and foster good faith. Within the army be magnanimous and martial. When the blades clash, be decisive and adroit. Within the state there should be harmony; within the army there should be standards. When the blades clash, investigate [the battlefield situation]. Within the state display cooperation; within the army display uprightness; in battle display good faith.

As for military formations: When advancing, the most important thing for the ranks is to be dispersed; when engaged in battle [it is] to be dense and for the weapons to be of mixed types. Instructions to the people should be thorough; quietness is the basis of order; awesomeness becomes advantageous when it is made manifest. When people preserve each other according to righteousness, then they will be stimulated to action. When many well-con-

ceived plans prove successful, the people submit to them. If they sincerely submit at the appropriate time, then subsequent affairs will be well ordered. When things are manifest, then the eye discerns them clearly. When plans have been decided, the mind is strong. When advancing and withdrawing are without doubt, one can give the appearance of being without plans.³⁵ When listening to [legal affairs] and punishing [the guilty], do not wantonly change their designations or change their flags.

Whenever affairs are well executed they will endure; when they accord with ancient ways they can be effected. When the oath is clear and stimulating the men will be strong, and you will extinguish [the effects] of baleful omens and auspicious signs.

The Tao for eliminating baleful omens [and auspicious signs] is as follows. One is called righteousness. Charge [the people] with good faith, approach them with strength,³⁶ establish the foundation [of kingly government], and unify the strategic power of All under Heaven. There will not be any men who are not pleased, so this is termed "doubly employing the people."

Another is called [advantages conferred by] the strategic balance of power [*ch'üan*]. Increase [the enemy's] excesses, seize what he loves. Then acting from without, we can cause a response from within.³⁷

The first is termed men; the second, uprightness; the third, language; the fourth, skill; the fifth, fire; the sixth, water; the seventh, weapons. They are referred to as the Seven Administrative Affairs.

Glory, profit, shame, and death are referred to as the Four Preservations.

Being tolerant and congenial while yet accumulating awesomeness [is the way] to prevent transgressions and change intentions. In all cases this is the Tao.

Only benevolence can attract people; however, if one is benevolent but not trustworthy, then on the contrary he will vanquish himself. Treat men as men, be upright with the upright, employ appropriate language, and use fire only where it should be used.

As for the Tao of Warfare: After you have aroused [the people's] *ch'i* [spirit] and moreover enacted governmental measures [such as rewards and punishments], encompass them with a benign countenance, and lead them with your speeches. Upbraid them in accord with their fears; assign affairs in accord with their desires. When you have crossed the enemy's borders and taken control of his territory, appoint people to the tasks of government. These are termed "methods of war."

All human qualities must be sought among the masses. Test and evaluate them in terms of name and action [to see if they cohere], for they must excel at implementation. If they are to perform some action but do not, then you yourself should lead them. If they are to perform some action and do so, then ensure that they do not forget it.³⁸ If you test them three times successfully, then make [their talents] evident.³⁹ What is appropriate to human life is termed the law.

In general the Tao for imposing order on chaos consists of first, benevolence; second, credibility; third, straightforwardness; fourth, unity; fifth, righteousness; sixth, change [wrought by authority]; seventh, centralized authority.

The Tao for establishing the laws consists of first, acceptance [of constraints]; second, the laws; third, the establishment [of the talented and upright]; fourth, urgency [in administration]; fifth, distinguishing them with insignia; sixth, ordering the colors; seventh, no nonstandard uniforms among the officers.

As for the army, when the [power of the] law lies solely with oneself, it is termed "centralized." When those below the ruler all fear the law, it is termed "law." When the army does not listen to minor affairs; when in battle it does not concern itself with small advantages; and when on the day of conflict it successfully completes its plans in subtle fashion, it is termed "the Tao."

As for warfare: When upright methods do not prove effective, then centralized control of affairs [must be undertaken]. [If the people] do not submit [to Virtue], then laws must be imposed. If they do not trust each other, they must be unified. If they are dilatory, move them; if they are doubtful, change [their doubts]. If the people do not trust the ruler, then whatever is promulgated must not be revised. This has been the administrative rule from antiquity.

4. Strict Positions⁴⁰

In general, as for the Tao of Warfare: Positions should be strictly defined; administrative measures should be severe; strength should be nimble; the [soldier's] *ch'i* should be constrained; and the minds [of the officers and people] should be unified.

In general, as for the Tao of Warfare: Rank and appoint men to office who understand the Tao and display righteousness. Establish companies and squads.⁴¹ Order the rows and files. Set the correct [spacing between] the horizontal and vertical.⁴² Investigate whether names and realities [correspond].

Those soldiers who stand [in their formations] should advance and then crouch down; those who [fire from a] squatting position should advance and then kneel.⁴³ If they are frightened make the formations dense; if they are in danger have them assume a sitting position. If [the enemy] is seen at a distance they will not fear them; if, when they are close, they do not look at them they will not scatter.⁴⁴

When the commanding general dismounts from his chariot, the generals of the left and right also dismount, those wearing armor all sit, and the oath is sworn, after which the army is slowly advanced.⁴⁵ All officers, from the generals down to the infantry squad leaders, wear armor.⁴⁶ Calculate the deployment of the light and heavy forces. Rouse the horses to action; have the infantrymen and armored soldiers set up a clamor. If they are afraid also collapse them into a tighter unit. Those who are kneeling should squat down; those who are squatting should lie down. Have them crawl forward on their knees, then put them at ease.⁴⁷ Have them get up, shout, and advance to the drums. Then signal a halt with the bells. With gagged mouths and minimal dry rations, swear the oath. Have the troops withdraw, crawling back on their knees.⁴⁸ Seize and summarily execute any deserters to stop the others from looking about [to desert]. Shout in order to lead them.⁴⁹ If they are too terrified of the enemy, do not threaten them with execution and severe punishments but display a magnanimous countenance. Speak to them about what they have to live for;⁵⁰ supervise them in their duties.

Within the Three Armies disciplinary action is not imposed on anyone for more than half a day. Confinement does not go beyond a rest period, nor is their food reduced by more than half. If you correct their doubts and delusions they can be led, can be made to submit to orders.

In general, in battle one endures through strength, and gains victory through spirit. One can endure with a solid defense, but will achieve victory through being endangered. When the heart's foundation is solid, a new surge

of *ch'i* will bring victory. With armor one is secure; with weapons one attains victory.

In general, the chariots realize security through close formations; the infantry becomes solid through squatting; armor becomes solid through weight;⁵¹ victory is attained through the lightness of the weapons.

When men have minds set on victory, all they see is the enemy. When men have minds filled with fear, all they see is their fear. When these two minds intersect and determine [action], [it is essential that] the advantages [as perceived by each] are as one.⁵² It is the [commander's] duty to create this unification. Only from [the perspective of] authority [*ch'üan*] can it be seen.

In general, in warfare: If you advance somewhat into the enemy's territory with a light force it is dangerous.⁵³ If you advance with a heavy force deep into the enemy's territory you will accomplish nothing. If you advance with a light force deep into enemy territory you will be defeated. If you advance with a heavy force somewhat into the enemy's territory you can fight successfully. Thus in warfare the light and heavy are mutually related.

When halting be careful about the weapons and armor.⁵⁴ When on the march be cautious about the rows and files. When in battle be careful about advancing and stopping.

In general, in warfare: If you are respectful [the troops] will be satisfied. If you lead in person they will follow. When orders are annoying they will be ignored. When commands are issued in proper measure they will be seriously regarded. When the drumbeat is rapid they will move quickly; when the drumbeat is more measured they will move accordingly. When their uniforms are light they will feel quick; if lustrous they will feel stalwart.

In general, when the horses and chariots are sturdy, the armor and weapons advantageous, then even a light force can penetrate deeply.⁵⁵ If you esteem equality [in rank], then no one will strive for great results. If you value taking charge, then many will die [for the cause]. If you value life, then there

will be many doubts; if you honor death [itself], then they will not be victorious.

In general, men will die for love, out of anger, out of [fear of] awesomeness, for righteousness, and for profit.

In general, it is the Tao of Warfare that when they are well instructed men will regard death lightly. When they are constrained by the Tao they will die for the upright.

In general, in warfare act in accord with whether [the troops have the spirit] to be victorious or not. Accord with Heaven, accord with men.⁵⁶

In general, in warfare: The Three Armies should not be on the alert for more than three days; a single company should not be vigilant more than half a day; while the guard duty⁵⁷ for a single soldier should not exceed one rest period.

Those that greatly excel in warfare use the foundation; next in greatness are those that employ the ends.⁵⁸ Warfare is taking control of strategy, preserving the subtle. The foundation and the ends are only a question of [exploiting] the strategic balance of power [*ch'üan*].

In general, regarding victory: When the Three Armies are united as one man they will conquer.

In general, as for the drums: There are drums [directing the deployment of] the flags and pennants; drums for [advancing] the chariots; drums for the horses;⁵⁹ drums for [directing] the infantry; drums for the different types of troops; drums for the head;⁶⁰ and drums for the feet.⁶¹ All seven should be properly prepared and ordered.

In general, in warfare: When the formation is already solid, do not make it heavier. When your main forces are advancing, do not commit all of them for by doing so you will be endangered.

In general, in warfare: It is not forming a battle array that is difficult; it is reaching the point that the men can be ordered into formation that is hard. It is not attaining the ability to order them into formation that is difficult; it is

reaching the point of being able to employ them that is hard. If is not knowing what to do that is difficult; it is putting it into effect that is hard. Men from each [of the four quarters] have their own nature. Character differs from region to region. Through teaching they come to have regional habits, the customs of each state [thus] being different. [Only] through the Tao are their customs transformed.

In general, whether [the troops] are numerous or few, even though they have already attained victory, they should act as if they had not been victorious.⁶² The troops should not boast about the sharpness of their weapons or speak of the stoutness of their armor or the sturdiness of their chariots or the quality of their horses; nor should the masses take themselves to be many—for they have not yet gained the Tao.⁶³

In general, if in warfare you are victorious, share the achievement and praise with the troops. If you are about to reengage in battle, then make their rewards exceptionally generous and the punishments heavier. If you failed to direct them to victory, accept the blame yourself. If you must fight again, swear an oath and assume a forward position. Do not repeat your previous tactics. Whether you win or not, do not deviate from this method, for it is termed the "True Principle."

In general, with regard to the people: Rescue them with benevolence; engage in battle with righteousness; make decisions through wisdom; fight with courage; exercise sole authority through credibility; encourage them with profits; and gain victory through achievements. Thus the mind must embody benevolence and actions should incorporate righteousness. Relying on [the nature of] things is wisdom; relying on the great is courage; relying on long-standing [relations leads to] good faith. Yielding results in harmony, and the men of themselves will be deferential. If men attribute failings to themselves, they will compete to be worthy.⁶⁴ When men are pleased in their hearts, they will exhaust their strength.

In general, in warfare: Attack the weak and quiet, avoid the strong and quiet. Attack the tired, avoid the well trained and alert. Attack the truly afraid, avoid those that [display] only minor fears. From antiquity these have been the rules for governing [the army].

5. Employing Masses

In general, as for the Tao of Warfare: When you employ a small number they must be solid.⁶⁵ When you employ a large mass they must be well ordered. With a small force it is advantageous to harass the enemy; with a large mass it is advantageous to use orthodox [tactics].⁶⁶ When employing a large mass advance and stop; when employing a small number advance and withdraw. If your large mass encounters a small enemy force, surround them at a distance but leave one side open.⁶⁷ [Conversely,] if you divide [your forces] and attack in turn, a small force can withstand a large mass. If their masses are beset by uncertainty, you should take advantage of it. If you are contending for a strategic position, abandon your flags [as if in flight, and when the enemy attacks] turn around to mount a counterattack. If the enemy is vast, then concentrate your troops and let them surround you. If the enemy is fewer and fearful, avoid them and leave a path open.⁶⁸

In general, as for warfare: Keep the wind to your back, the mountains behind you, heights on the right, and defiles on the left. Pass through wetlands, cross over damaged roads. Complete double the normal march before encamping; select ground [for encamping] configured like a turtle's back.

In general, as for warfare: After deploying observe their actions. Watch the enemy and then initiate movement. If they are waiting [for our attack], then act accordingly. Do not drum the advance, but await the moment when their masses arise. If they attack, entrench your forces and observe them.

In general, as for warfare: [Employ] large and small numbers to observe their tactical variations; advance and retreat to probe the solidity of their defenses. Endanger them to observe their fears. Be tranquil to observe if they become lax. Move to observe if they have doubts. Mount a surprise attack and observe their discipline.

Mount a sudden strike on their doubts. Attack their haste.⁶⁹ Force them to constrict their deployment. Launch a sudden strike against their order. Take advantage of [their failure] to avoid harm.⁷⁰ Obstruct their strategy. Seize their thoughts. Capitalize on their fears.

In general, when pursuing a fleeing enemy do not rest. If some of the enemy stop on the road, then be wary!⁷¹

In general, when nearing an enemy's capital, you must have a road by which to advance; when about to withdraw, you must ponder the return route.

In general, as for warfare: If you move first [it will be easy] to become exhausted. If you move after [the enemy, the men] may become afraid. If you rest, [the men may] become lax; if you do not rest, they may also become exhausted. Yet if you rest very long, on the contrary, they may also become afraid.

Writing letters of final farewell is referred to as "breaking off all thoughts of life." Selecting the elite and ranking the weapons is termed "increasing the strength of the men." Casting aside the implements of office and carrying only minimal rations is termed "opening the men's thoughts." From antiquity this has been the rule.

3

Sun-tzu's
Art of War

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Translator's Introduction

OF THE *Seven Military Classics* only Sun-tzu's *Military Strategy*, traditionally known as the *Art of War*, has received much exposure in the West. First translated by a French missionary approximately two hundred years ago, it was reportedly studied and effectively employed by Napoleon and possibly by certain members of the Nazi High Command. For the past two thousand years it remained the most important military treatise in Asia, where even the common people knew it by name. Chinese, Japanese, and Korean military theorists and professional soldiers have all studied it, and many of the strategies have played a significant role in Japan's storied military history, commencing about the eighth century A.D.¹ Over the millennia the book's concepts have stimulated intense debates and vehement philosophical discussions, commanding the attention of significant figures in many realms. Although the book has been rendered into English numerous times, with the translations of Lionel Giles² and Samuel B. Griffith³ still widely available, further translations continue to appear. Some of these are merely versions of Giles—acknowledged or otherwise—under a different cover, whereas others represent entirely new works.⁴

Sun-tzu and the Text

It has long been claimed that the *Art of War* is China's oldest and most profound military treatise, with all other works relegated to secondary status at best. Traditionalists attribute the book to the historical Sun Wu, who is recorded in the *Shih chi* and the *Spring and Autumn Annals of Wu and Yüeh* as having been active in the last years of the sixth century B.C., beginning about 512 B.C. In their view the book should therefore date from this period and should contain his theories and concepts of military strategy. However, other scholars have (1) identified numerous historical anachronisms in the extant text that encompass terms, events, technology, and philosophical concepts;⁵ (2) emphasized the absence of any evidence (such as should appear in the *Tso*

chuan, the classic record of the period's political events) corroborating Sun Wu's strategic role in the wars between Wu and Yüeh;⁶ and (3) focused on the disparity between the advanced concepts and nature of large-scale warfare discussed in the *Art of War* and the more limited, primitive battles that characterized the end of the sixth century B.C.⁷

The traditionalist interpretation derives critical support from the numerous passages from the *Art of War* that are visible in most other military writings because, it is asserted, such extensive borrowing could only have been possible from the earliest text.⁸ Moreover, this widespread copying is thought to provide ample evidence that the *Art of War* was considered early on the most important military treatise and was valued far more than any other work, oral or written. The origination of certain analytical concepts, such as terrain classification, is also credited to Sun-tzu; therefore, their utilization by the compilers of the *Ssu-ma Fa* is thought to prove Sun-tzu's historical priority indisputably rather than to raise the possibility that Sun-tzu benefited from other works.

However, even if the likelihood of later accretions and revisions is disregarded, the traditionalist position still ignores the development and existence of more than two thousand years of warfare and tactics prior to 500 B.C. and attributes the virtual creation of military strategy to Sun-tzu alone.⁹ The concise, often abstract nature of his passages is cited as evidence that the book was composed at an early stage in the development of Chinese writing, but an equally compelling argument can be advanced that such a philosophically sophisticated style would only be possible from a foundation of extensive battlefield experience and a solid tradition of serious military contemplation.¹⁰ Basic concepts and common passages seem to argue in favor of a comprehensive military tradition and evolving expertise rather than creation *ex nihilo*.

Excluding the now-untenable position of those skeptics who dismissed the book as a late fabrication,¹¹ three major views seem to prevail regarding the composition date of the *Art of War*. The first identifies it with the historic Sun Wu, with final compilation occurring shortly after his death in the early fifth century B.C.¹² The second, which is based on internal evidence, consigns it to the middle-to-late Warring States period, or the fourth to third centuries B.C.¹³ The third, also founded on internal evidence supplemented by recently discovered texts, places it somewhere in the last half of the fifth century B.C.¹⁴ It is unlikely that a final determination can ever be realized, especially because traditionalists tend to be very emotional in their defense of Sun-tzu's authenticity. However, it seems likely that the historical figure existed and that he not only served as a strategist and possibly a general but

also composed the core of the book that bears his name. Thereafter, the essential teachings were probably transmitted within the family or a close-knit school of disciples, being improved and revised with the passing decades while gradually gaining wider dissemination. The early text may even have been edited by Sun-tzu's famous descendant Sun Pin, who also extensively employed its teachings in his own *Military Methods*.¹⁵

The *Shih chi* incorporates the biographies of numerous distinguished military strategists and generals, including Sun-tzu.¹⁶ However, the *Spring and Autumn Annals of Wu and Yüeh* recounts the somewhat more interesting version that follows:

In the third year of King Ho-lü's reign Wu's generals wanted to attack Ch'u, but no action was taken. Wu Tzu-hsü¹⁷ and Po Hsi spoke with each other: "We nurture officers and make plans on behalf of the king. These strategies will be advantageous to the state, and for this reason the king should attack Ch'u. But he has put off issuing the orders and does not have any intention to mobilize the army. What should we do?"

After a while the King of Wu queried Wu Tzu-hsü and Po Hsi: "I want to send forth the army. What do you think?" Wu Tzu-hsü and Po Hsi replied: "We would like to receive the order." The King of Wu secretly thought the two of them harbored great enmity for Ch'u. He was deeply afraid that they would take the army out, only to be exterminated. He mounted his tower, faced into the southern wind, and groaned. After a while he sighed. None of his ministers understood the king's thoughts. Wu Tzu-hsü secretly realized the king would not decide, so he recommended Sun-tzu to him.

Sun-tzu, whose name was Wu, was a native of Wu.¹⁸ He excelled at military strategy but dwelled in secrecy far away from civilization, so ordinary people did not know of his ability. Wu Tzu-hsü, himself enlightened, wise, and skilled in discrimination, knew Sun-tzu could penetrate and destroy the enemy. One morning when he was discussing military affairs he recommended Sun-tzu seven times. The King of Wu said: "Since you have found an excuse to advance this *shih*, I want to have him brought in." He questioned Sun-tzu about military strategy, and each time that he laid out a section of his book the king could not praise him enough.

Greatly pleased he inquired: "If possible, I would like a minor test of your military strategy." Sun-tzu said: "It is possible. We can conduct a minor test with women from the inner palace." The king said: "I agree." Sun-tzu said: "I would like to have two of your Majesty's beloved concubines act as company commanders, each to direct a company." He ordered all three hundred women to wear helmets and armor, to carry swords and shields, and [to] stand. He instructed them in military methods, that in accord with the drum they should advance, withdraw, go left or right, or turn around. He had them know the prohibitions and then ordered: "At the first beating of the drum you should all assem-

ble, at the second drumming you should advance with your weapons, and at the third deploy into military formation." At this the palace women all covered their mouths and laughed.

Sun-tzu then personally took up the sticks and beat the drums, giving the orders three times and explaining them five times. They laughed as before. Sun-tzu saw that the women laughed continuously and would not stop.

Sun-tzu was enraged. His eyes suddenly opened wide, his sound was like a terrifying tiger, his hair stood on end under his cap, and his neck broke the tassels at the side. He said to the Master of Laws: "Get the executioner's axes."

Sun-tzu [then] said: "If the instructions are not clear, if the explanations and orders are not trusted, it is the general's offense. When they have already been instructed three times and the orders explained five times, if the troops still do not perform, it is the fault of the officers. According to the rescripts for military discipline, what is the procedure?" The Master of Laws said: "Decapitation!" Sun-tzu then ordered the beheading of the two company commanders, the king's favorite concubines.¹⁹

The King of Wu ascended his platform to observe just when they were about to behead his beloved concubines. He had an official hasten down to them with orders to say: "I already know the general is able to command forces. Without these two concubines my food will not be sweet. It would be appropriate not to behead them."

Sun-tzu said: "I have already received my commission as commanding general. According to the rules for generals, when I, as a general, am in command of the army even though you issue orders to me, I do not [have to] accept them." [He then had them beheaded.]

He again beat the drum, and they went left and right, advanced and withdrew, and turned around in accord with the prescribed standards without daring to blink an eye. The two companies were silent, not daring to look around. Thereupon Sun-tzu reported to the King of Wu: "The army is already well-ordered. I would like your Majesty to observe them. However you might want to employ them, even sending them forth into fire and water, will not present any difficulty. They can be used to settle All under Heaven."

The King of Wu was suddenly displeased. He said: "I know that you excel at employing the army. Even though I can thereby become a hegemon, there is no place to exercise them. General, please dismiss the army and return to your dwelling. I am unwilling to act further."

Sun-tzu said: "Your Majesty only likes the words, he is not able to realize their substance." Wu Tzu-hsü remonstrated: "I have heard that the army is an inauspicious affair²⁰ and cannot be wantonly tested. Thus if one forms an army but does not go forth to launch a punitive attack, then the military Tao will be unclear. Now if your Majesty sincerely seeks talented *shih* and wants to mobilize the army to execute the brutal state of Ch'u, become hegemon of All under Heaven, and overawe the feudal lords, if you do not employ Sun-tzu as your

general, who can ford the Huai, cross the Ssu, and traverse a thousand *li* to engage in battle?" Thereupon the King of Wu was elated. He had the drum beaten to convene the army's staff, assembled the troops, and attacked Ch'u. Sun-tzu took Shu, killing the two renegade Wu generals Kai Yu and Chu Yung.²¹

The *Shih chi* biography further states that "to the West he defeated the powerful state of Ch'u and advanced into Ying. To the north he overawed Ch'i and Chin, and his name became manifest among the feudal lords. This was due to Sun-tzu's power among them." Some military historians identify him with several campaigns against Ch'u that followed, commencing in 511 B.C.—the year after his initial interview with King Ho-lü—although he is never mentioned in any recorded source as having sole command of the troops. Presumably, Sun-tzu realized the difficulty of surviving under the evolving, unstable political conditions of his time and set an example for later ages by retiring to obscurity, leaving his work behind.²²

The *Shih chi* biography differs in another fundamental aspect from the *Spring and Autumn Annals of Wu and Yüeh* because it identifies Sun-tzu as a native of Ch'i rather than of Wu.²³ This would place his background in a state that enjoyed the heritage of the T'ai Kung's thought—one originally on the periphery of the ancient Chou political world, which was known for its diversity of views and imaginative theories. Because the *Art of War* clearly reflects many Taoist conceptions²⁴ and is philosophically sophisticated, Sun-tzu may well have been a man of Ch'i.

Main Concepts in the *Art of War*

Sun-tzu's *Art of War*, as transmitted through the ages, consists of thirteen chapters of varying length—each ostensibly focused on a specific topic. Although most contemporary Chinese military scholars continue to characterize the entire work as an organic whole, marked by the logical progression and development of themes from start to finish, obvious relationships between supposedly connected passages are frequently difficult to determine or are simply nonexistent. However, the major concepts generally receive frequent, logically consistent treatment throughout, which supports the attribution of the book to a single figure or a well-integrated school of thought.²⁵

The military writings unearthed in the Lin-i Han dynasty tomb include a copy of the *Art of War* essentially in its traditional form, together with significant additional material such as the "King of Wu's Questions."²⁶ The translation that follows has been based on the heavily annotated classical version because that version reflects the understanding and views of the past one thousand years and the beliefs on which government and military officials

based their actions in real history. The traditional text has been revised only when the tomb materials resolve otherwise-opaque passages, although the impact of such changes on the overall content remains minimal. Significant variations in characters and sentences are discussed in notes supplementing the translation.

Because the *Art of War* is remarkably lucid, if compressed and sometimes enigmatic, only a brief introduction of the major topics is undertaken here. General Griffith's translation, published by Oxford, remains widely available, and his detailed introduction to Sun-tzu's thought can be consulted by those who wish a more extensive, systematic English presentation.²⁷ The analytical literature in Chinese and Japanese is too copious to enumerate; selected works are cited in the notes because the commentators may cast light on different concepts or passages.

At the time the *Art of War* was probably composed, warfare had evolved sufficiently to endanger the very existence of virtually every state. Therefore Sun-tzu felt that mobilizing a nation for war and committing its army to battle could only be undertaken with the greatest gravity.²⁸ His entire approach to employing the army is thoroughly analytical, mandating careful planning and the formulation of an overall strategy before commencing the campaign. The focus of all grand strategy must be the development of a prosperous, contented populace whose willing allegiance to the ruler is unquestioned.²⁹ Thereafter, diplomatic initiatives can be effected, but military preparations should never be neglected. The primary objective should be to subjugate other states without actually engaging in armed combat, thereby realizing the ideal of complete victory. Whenever possible this should be achieved through diplomatic coercion, thwarting the enemy's plans and alliances, and frustrating its strategy. The government should resort to armed combat only if the enemy threatens the state with military action or refuses to acquiesce without being forced into submission through warfare. Even when exercising this option, every military campaign should focus on achieving maximum results with minimum risk and exposure, limiting as far as possible the destruction that is inflicted and suffered.

Sun-tzu emphasizes rational self-control throughout the *Art of War*, stressing the vital necessity to avoid all engagements not based on extensive, detailed analyses of the situation and combat options and of one's own capabilities.³⁰ Haste, fear of being labeled a coward, and personal emotions such as anger and hatred should never be permitted to adversely influence state and command decisionmaking.³¹ The army should never be thrown rashly

into an engagement, thrust into a war, or mobilized unnecessarily. Instead, restraint should be exercised, although measures should be implemented to ensure that the army cannot be defeated. Accordingly, certain tactical situations and configurations of terrain should be avoided and instead be turned to one's advantage when opportune. Thereafter, the focus can be directed toward realizing the predetermined campaign strategy and implementing appropriate tactics to defeat the army.

Sun-tzu's basic strategy focuses on manipulating the enemy, creating the opportunity for an easy victory. To this end he classifies the types of terrain and their exploitation; advances numerous tactics for probing, manipulating, and weakening the enemy; conceptualizes the tactical situation in terms of extensive series of mutually defining elements;³² and advocates the employment of both orthodox (*cheng*) and unorthodox (*ch'i*) troops to wrest the victory.³³ The enemy is lured into untenable positions with prospects of gain, enervated by being wearied and exhausted before the attack, and penetrated by forces that are suddenly concentrated at vulnerable points. The army should always be active, even when assuming a defensive posture, in order to create and seize the temporary tactical advantage (*ch'üan*) that will ensure victory. Avoiding a strong force is not cowardice but indicates wisdom because it is self-defeating to fight when and where it is not advantageous.³⁴

The basic principle is "go forth where they do not expect it; attack where they are not prepared." This principle can only be realized through secrecy in all activities, through complete self-control and strict discipline within the army, and by being unfathomable. Warfare is a matter of deception—of constantly creating false appearances, spreading disinformation, and employing trickery and deceit. When such deception is imaginatively created and effectively implemented, the enemy will neither know where to attack nor what formations to employ and thus will be condemned to making fatal errors.

The corollary to being unknowable is seeking out and gaining detailed knowledge of the enemy through all available means, including the rigorous employment of spies. The fundamental principle is never to rely on the goodwill of others or on fortuitous circumstances but to guarantee through knowledge, active study, and defensive preparation that the enemy cannot mount a surprise attack or gain a victory through simple coercion.

Throughout the book Sun-tzu discusses the essential problem of command: forging a clearly defined organization that is in control of thoroughly disciplined, well-ordered troops. The critical element is spirit, technically known as *ch'i*—the essential, vital energy of life.³⁵ This is the component associated with will and intention; when the men are well trained, properly

fed, clothed, and equipped, and if their spirits are roused, they will fight vigorously. However, if physical or material conditions have blunted their spirit; if an imbalance exists in the relationship between command and troops; if for any reason the troops have lost their motivation, they will be defeated. Conversely, the commanding general must manipulate the situation so as to avoid the enemy when its spirits are strong—such as early in the day—and exploit any opportunity presented by its diminishment, attacking when its troops no longer have any inclination to fight, such as when they are about to return to camp. Prolonged warfare can only lead to enervation; therefore, careful planning is paramount to guarantee the swift execution of the campaign strategy. Certain situations, such as fatal terrain on which a desperate battle must be fought, are conducive to eliciting the army's greatest efforts. Others are debilitating, dangerous, and even fatal and must be scrupulously avoided. Rewards and punishments provide the basis for control, but every effort must be made to foster and maintain the proper attitude of desire and commitment on the part of the men. Accordingly, all detrimental stimuli, such as omens and rumors, must be prohibited.³⁶

Finally, Sun-tzu sought to maneuver the army into a position where it enjoyed such a great tactical advantage that the impact of its attack, the impulse of its "strategic configuration of power" [*shih*],³⁷ would be like the sudden onrush of water cascading down from mountain peaks. Deploying the troops into a suitable configuration [*hsing*];³⁸ creating a favorable "imbalance of power" [*ch'üan*];³⁹ concentrating forces on focused targets; exploiting advantages of terrain; and stimulating the men's spirits would all be directed toward this moment, toward this decisive objective.

1. Initial Estimations¹

Sun-tzu said:

"Warfare is the greatest affair of state, the basis of life and death, the Way [Tao] to survival or extinction. It must be thoroughly pondered and analyzed.

"Therefore, structure it according to [the following] five factors, evaluate it comparatively through estimations, and seek out its true nature.² The first is termed the Tao, the second Heaven, the third Earth, the fourth generals, and the fifth the laws [for military organization and discipline].

"The Tao³ causes the people to be fully in accord with the ruler.⁴ [Thus] they will die with him; they will live with him and not fear danger.⁵

"Heaven encompasses yin and yang, cold and heat, and the constraints of the seasons.⁶

"Earth encompasses far or near, difficult or easy, expansive or confined, fatal or tenable terrain.⁷

"The general encompasses wisdom, credibility, benevolence, courage, and strictness.

"The laws [for military organization and discipline] encompass organization and regulations, the Tao of command, and the management of logistics.⁸

"There are no generals who have not heard of these five. Those who understand them will be victorious; those who do not understand them will not be victorious.

"Thus when making a comparative evaluation through estimations, seeking out its true nature, ask:

Which ruler has the Tao?

Which general has greater ability?

Who has gained [the advantages of] Heaven and Earth?

Whose laws and orders are more thoroughly implemented?
 Whose forces⁹ are stronger?
 Whose officers and troops are better trained?
 Whose rewards and punishments are clearer?

"From these I will know victory and defeat!

"If a general follows my [methods for] estimation and you employ him, he will certainly be victorious and should be retained. If a general does not follow my [methods for] estimation and you employ him, he will certainly be defeated, so dismiss him.¹⁰

"After estimating the advantages in accord with what you have heard, put it into effect with strategic power [*shih*]¹¹ supplemented by field tactics which respond to external factors.¹² As for strategic power, [it is] controlling the tactical imbalance of power [*ch'üan*] in accord with the gains to be realized.¹³

"Warfare is the Way [Tao] of deception.¹⁴ Thus although [you are] capable, display incapability to them. When committed to employing your forces, feign inactivity. When [your objective] is nearby, make it appear as if distant; when far away, create the illusion of being nearby.¹⁵

"Display profits to entice them. Create disorder [in their forces] and take them.¹⁶

"If they are substantial,¹⁷ prepare for them; if they are strong, avoid them.

"If they are angry, perturb them;¹⁸ be deferential to foster their arrogance.¹⁹

"If they are rested, force them to exert themselves.

"If they are united, cause them to be separated.

"Attack where they are unprepared.

"Go forth where they will not expect it.

"These are the ways military strategists are victorious. They cannot be spoken of in advance.²⁰

"Before the engagement, one who determines in the ancestral temple that he will be victorious has found that the majority of factors are in his favor. Before the engagement one who determines in the ancestral temple that he will not be victorious has found few factors are in his favor.

"If one who finds that the majority of factors favor him will be victorious while one who has found few factors favor him will be defeated, what about someone who finds no factors in his favor?²¹

"If I observe it from this perspective, victory and defeat will be apparent."

2. Waging War

Sun-tzu said:

"In general, the strategy for employing the military [is this]:²² If there are one thousand four-horse attack chariots, one thousand leather-armored support chariots, one hundred thousand mailed troops, and provisions are transported one thousand *li*, then the domestic and external campaign expenses, the expenditures for advisers and guests, materials such as glue and lacquer, and providing chariots and armor will be one thousand pieces of gold per day. Only then can an army of one hundred thousand be mobilized.

"When employing them in battle, a victory that is long in coming will blunt their weapons and dampen their ardor.²³ If you attack cities, their strength will be exhausted.²⁴ If you expose the army to a prolonged campaign, the state's resources will be inadequate.

"When the weapons have grown dull and spirits depressed, when our strength has been expended and resources consumed, then the feudal lords will take advantage of our exhaustion to arise. Even though you have wise generals, they will not be able to achieve a good result.

"Thus in military campaigns I have heard of awkward speed but have never seen any skill in lengthy campaigns. No country has ever profited from protracted warfare. Those who do not thoroughly comprehend the dangers inherent in employing the army are incapable of truly knowing the potential advantages of military actions.

"One who excels in employing the military does not conscript the people twice or transport provisions a third time.²⁵ If you obtain your equipment

from within the state and rely on seizing provisions from the enemy, then the army's foodstuffs will be sufficient.

"The state is impoverished by the army when it transports provisions far off. When provisions are transported far off, the hundred surnames²⁶ are impoverished.

"Those in proximity to the army will sell their goods expensively.²⁷ When goods are expensive, the hundred surname's wealth will be exhausted. When their wealth is exhausted, they will be extremely hard pressed [to supply] their village's military impositions.²⁸

"When their strength has been expended and their wealth depleted, then the houses in the central plains will be empty.²⁹ The expenses of the hundred surnames will be some seven-tenths³⁰ of whatever they have. The ruler's irrecoverable expenditures—such as ruined chariots, exhausted horses, armor, helmets, arrows and crossbows, halberd-tipped and spear-tipped [large, movable] protective shields, strong oxen,³¹ and large wagons—will consume six-tenths of his resources.

"Thus the wise general will concentrate on securing provisions from the enemy. One bushel of the enemy's foodstuffs is worth twenty of ours; one picul of fodder is worth twenty of ours.

"Thus what [motivates men] to slay the enemy is anger; what [stimulates them] to seize profits³² from the enemy is material goods. Thus in chariot encounters, when ten or more chariots are captured, reward the first to get one. Change their flags and pennants to ours; intermix and employ them with our own chariots. Treat the captured soldiers well in order to nurture them [for our use]. This is referred to as 'conquering the enemy and growing stronger.'

"Thus the army values being victorious; it does not value prolonged warfare. Therefore, a general who understands warfare is Master of Fate for the people, ruler of the state's security or endangerment."

3. Planning Offensives

Sun-tzu said:

"In general, the method for employing the military is this: Preserving the [enemy's] state capital is best, destroying their state capital second-best.³³

Preserving their army is best, destroying their army second-best.³⁴ Preserving their battalions is best, destroying their battalions second-best. Preserving their companies is best, destroying their companies second-best. Preserving their squads is best, destroying their squads second-best. For this reason attaining one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the pinnacle of excellence. Subjugating the enemy's army without fighting is the true pinnacle of excellence.

"Thus the highest realization of warfare is to attack the enemy's plans; next is to attack their alliances; next to attack their army; and the lowest is to attack their fortified cities.

"This tactic of attacking fortified cities is adopted only when unavoidable. Preparing large movable protective shields, armored assault wagons, and other equipment and devices will require three months. Building earthworks³⁵ will require another three months to complete. If the general cannot overcome his impatience but instead launches an assault wherein his men swarm over the walls like ants, he will kill one-third of his officers and troops, and the city will still not be taken. This is the disaster that results from attacking [fortified cities].

"Thus one who excels at employing the military subjugates other people's armies without engaging in battle, captures other people's fortified cities without attacking them, and destroys others people's states without prolonged fighting. He must fight under Heaven with the paramount aim of 'preservation.'³⁶ Thus his weapons will not become dull, and the gains can be preserved. This is the strategy for planning offensives.

"In general, the strategy for employing the military is this: If your strength is ten times theirs, surround them; if five, then attack them; if double, then divide your forces.³⁷ If you are equal in strength to the enemy, you can engage him. If fewer, you can circumvent him. If outmatched, you can avoid him. Thus a small enemy that acts inflexibly³⁸ will become the captives of a large enemy.

"The general is the supporting pillar of state. If his talents are all-encompassing, the state will invariably be strong. If the supporting pillar is marked by fissures, the state will invariably grow weak.

"Thus there are three ways by which an army is put into difficulty by a ruler:

"He does not know that the Three Armies should not advance but instructs them to advance or does not know that the Three Armies should not withdraw and orders a retreat. This is termed 'entangling the army.'

"He does not understand the Three Armies' military affairs but [directs them] in the same way as his [civil] administration.³⁹ Then the officers will become confused.

"He does not understand the Three Armies' tactical balance of power [*ch'üan*] but undertakes responsibility for command. Then the officers will be doubtful.

"When the Three Armies are already confused and doubtful, the danger of the feudal lords [taking advantage of the situation] arises. This is referred to as 'a disordered army drawing another on to victory.'

"Thus there are five factors from which victory can be known:

"One who knows when he can fight, and when he cannot fight, will be victorious.

"One who recognizes⁴⁰ how to employ large and small numbers will be victorious.

"One whose upper and lower ranks have the same desires will be victorious.

"One who, fully prepared, awaits the unprepared will be victorious.

"One whose general is capable and not interfered with by the ruler will be victorious.

"These five are the Way [Tao] to know victory.

"Thus it is said that one who knows the enemy and knows himself⁴¹ will not be endangered in a hundred engagements. One who does not know the enemy but knows himself will sometimes be victorious, sometimes meet with defeat. One who knows neither the enemy nor himself will invariably be defeated in every engagement."

4. Military Disposition⁴²

Sun-tzu said:

"In antiquity those that excelled in warfare first made themselves unconquerable⁴³ in order to await [the moment when] the enemy could be conquered.

"Being unconquerable lies with yourself; being conquerable lies with the enemy.

"Thus one who excels in warfare⁴⁴ is able to make himself unconquerable, but cannot necessarily cause the enemy to be conquerable.

"Thus it is said a strategy for conquering the enemy can be known but yet not possible to implement.

"One who cannot be victorious assumes a defensive posture; one who can be victorious attacks. In these circumstances by assuming a defensive posture, strength will be more than adequate, whereas in offensive actions it would be inadequate.⁴⁵

"Those who excel at defense bury themselves away below the lowest depths of Earth. Those who excel at offense⁴⁶ move from above the greatest heights of Heaven. Thus they are able to preserve themselves and attain complete victory.

"Perceiving a victory that does not surpass what the masses could know is not the pinnacle of excellence. Wrestling victories for which All under Heaven proclaim your excellence is not the pinnacle of excellence.

"Thus lifting an autumn hair cannot be considered great strength; seeing the sun and moon cannot be considered acute vision; hearing the sound of thunder cannot be considered having sensitive ears.

"Those that the ancients⁴⁷ referred to as excelling at warfare conquered those who were easy to conquer. Thus the victories of those that excelled in warfare were not marked by fame for wisdom or courageous achievement.⁴⁸ Thus their victories were free from errors. One who is free from errors directs his measures toward [certain] victory, conquering those who are already defeated.

"Thus one who excels at warfare first establishes himself in a position where he cannot be defeated while not losing [any opportunity] to defeat the enemy.

"For this reason, the victorious army first realizes the conditions for victory, and then seeks to engage in battle. The vanquished army fights first, and then seeks victory.

"One⁴⁹ who excels at employing the military cultivates the Tao⁵⁰ and preserves the laws; therefore, he is able to be the regulator of victory and defeat.⁵¹

"As for military methods⁵²: the first is termed measurement; the second, estimation [of forces]; the third, calculation [of numbers of men]; the fourth, weighing [relative strength]; and the fifth, victory.

"Terrain gives birth to measurement;⁵³ measurement produces the estimation [of forces].⁵⁴ Estimation [of forces] gives rise to calculating [the numbers of men]. Calculating [the numbers of men] gives rise to weighing [strength]. Weighing [strength] gives birth to victory.

"Thus the victorious army is like a ton compared with an ounce, while the defeated army is like an ounce weighed against a ton! The combat of the victorious⁵⁵ is like the sudden release of a pent-up torrent down a thousand-fathom gorge. This is the strategic disposition of force [*hsing*]."⁵⁶

5. Strategic Military Power⁵⁷

Sun-tzu said:

"In general, commanding a large number is like commanding a few. It is a question of dividing up the numbers. Fighting with a large number is like fighting with a few. It is a question of configuration and designation.⁵⁸

"What enable the masses of the Three Armies to invariably withstand the enemy without being defeated are the unorthodox [*ch'i*] and orthodox [*cheng*].⁵⁹

"If wherever the army attacks it is like a whetstone thrown against an egg, it is due to the vacuous and substantial.⁶⁰

"In general, in battle one engages with the orthodox and gains victory through the unorthodox. Thus one who excels at sending forth the unorthodox is as inexhaustible as Heaven,⁶¹ as unlimited as the Yangtze and Yellow rivers.⁶² What reach an end and begin again are the sun and moon. What die and are reborn⁶³ are the four seasons.

"The notes do not exceed five, but the changes⁶⁴ of the five notes can never be fully heard. The colors do not exceed five, but the changes of the five colors can never be completely seen. The flavors do not exceed five, but the changes of the five flavors can never be completely tasted. In warfare the strategic configurations of power [*shih*] do not exceed the unorthodox and orthodox, but the changes of the unorthodox and orthodox can never be completely exhausted. The unorthodox and orthodox mutually produce each other, just like an endless cycle.⁶⁵ Who can exhaust them?

"The strategic configuration of power [*shih*] [is visible in] the onrush of pent-up⁶⁶ water tumbling stones along. The [effect of] constraints⁶⁷ [is visible in] the onrush⁶⁸ of a bird of prey breaking the bones of its [target]. Thus the strategic configuration of power [*shih*] of those that excel in warfare is sharply focused, their constraints are precise.⁶⁹ Their strategic configuration of power [*shih*] is like a fully drawn crossbow, their constraints like the release of the trigger.

"Intermixed and turbulent, the fighting appears chaotic, but they cannot be made disordered. In turmoil and confusion, their deployment is circular,⁷⁰ and they cannot be defeated.

"[Simulated] chaos is given birth from control;⁷¹ [the illusion of] fear is given birth from courage; [feigned] weakness is given birth from strength. Order and disorder are a question of numbers; courage and fear are a question of the strategic configuration of power [*shih*]; strength and weakness are a question of the deployment [of forces (*hsing*)].

"Thus one who excels at moving the enemy deploys in a configuration [*hsing*] to which the enemy must respond. He offers something which the enemy must seize. With profit he moves them, with the foundation⁷² he awaits them.

“Thus one who excels at warfare seeks [victory] through the strategic configuration of power [*shih*], not from reliance on men. Thus he is able to select men and employ strategic power [*shih*].⁷³

“One who employs strategic power [*shih*] commands men in battle as if he were rolling logs and stones. The nature of wood and stone is to be quiet when stable but to move when on precipitous ground. If they are square they stop, if round they tend to move. Thus the strategic power [*shih*] of one who excels at employing men in warfare is comparable to rolling round boulders down a thousand-fathom mountain. Such is the strategic configuration of power [*shih*].”

6. Vacuity and Substance⁷⁴

Sun-tzu said:

“In general, whoever occupies the battleground first and awaits the enemy will be at ease; whoever occupies the battleground afterward and must race to the conflict will be fatigued. Thus one who excels at warfare compels men and is not compelled by other men.⁷⁵

“In order to cause the enemy to come of their own volition, extend some [apparent] profit. In order to prevent the enemy from coming forth, show them [the potential] harm.

“Thus if the enemy is rested you can tire him; if he is well fed you can make him hungry; if he is at rest you can move him. Go forth to positions to which he must race.⁷⁶ Race forth where he does not expect it.⁷⁷

“To travel a thousand *li* without becoming fatigued, traverse unoccupied terrain. To ensure taking the objective in an attack, strike positions that are undefended. To be certain of an impregnable defense, secure positions which the enemy will not attack.⁷⁸

“Thus when someone excels in attacking, the enemy does not know where to mount his defense; when someone excels at defense, the enemy does not

know where to attack. Subtle! Subtle! It approaches the formless.⁷⁹ Spiritual! Spiritual! It attains the soundless. Thus he can be the enemy's Master of Fate.

“To effect an unhampered⁸⁰ advance, strike their vacuities. To effect a retreat that cannot be overtaken, employ unmatched speed.⁸¹ Thus if I want to engage in combat, even though the enemy has high ramparts and deep moats, he cannot avoid doing battle because I attack objectives he must rescue.

“If I do not want to engage in combat, even though I merely draw a line on the ground and defend it, he will not be able to engage me in battle because we thwart his movements.

“Thus if I determine the enemy's disposition of forces [*hsing*] while I have no perceptible form,⁸² I can concentrate [my forces] while the enemy is fragmented. If we are concentrated into a single force while he is fragmented into ten, then we attack him with ten times his strength. Thus we are many and the enemy is few. If we can attack his few with our many, those who we engage in battle will be severely constrained.

“The location where we will engage the enemy must not become known to them. If it is not known, then the positions which they must prepare to defend will be numerous. If the positions the enemy prepares to defend are numerous, then the forces we will engage will be few. Thus if they prepare to defend the front, to the rear there will be few men. If they defend the rear, in the front there will be few. If they prepare to defend the left flank, then on the right there will be few men. If they prepare to defend the right flank, then on the left there will be few men. If there is no position left undefended, then there will not be any place with more than a few. The few [are the ones] who prepare against others; the many [are the ones] who make others prepare against them.⁸³

“Thus if one knows the field of battle and knows the day of battle, he can traverse a thousand *li* and assemble to engage in combat.⁸⁴ If he does not know the field of battle nor know the day for battle, then the left flank cannot aid the right nor the right flank aid the left; the front cannot aid the rear

nor the rear aid the front.⁸⁵ How much more so when the distant are some tens of *li* away and the near several *li* apart? As I analyze it, even though Yüeh's army is numerous, of what great advantage is it to them for attaining victory?⁸⁶ Thus I say victory can be achieved.⁸⁷ Even though the enemy is more numerous, they can be forced not to fight.

"Thus critically analyze them to know the estimations for gain and loss. Stimulate them to know the patterns of their movement and stopping. Determine their disposition of force [*hsing*] to know the tenable and fatal terrain. Probe them to know where they have an excess, where an insufficiency.

"Thus the pinnacle of military deployment approaches the formless. If it is formless, then even the deepest spy cannot discern it or the wise make plans against it.

"In accord with the enemy's disposition [*hsing*] we impose measures on the masses that produce victory, but the masses are unable to fathom them. Men all know the disposition [*hsing*] by which we attain victory, but no one knows the configuration [*hsing*] through which we control the victory. Thus a victorious battle [strategy] is not repeated, the configurations [*hsing*] of response [to the enemy] are inexhaustible.⁸⁸

"Now the army's disposition of force [*hsing*] is like water. Water's configuration [*hsing*]⁸⁹ avoids heights and races downward. The army's disposition of force [*hsing*]⁹⁰ avoids the substantial and strikes the vacuous. Water configures [*hsing*] its flow⁹¹ in accord with the terrain; the army controls its victory in accord with the enemy. Thus the army does not maintain any constant⁹² strategic configuration of power [*shih*]; water⁹³ has no constant shape [*hsing*]. One who is able to change and transform in accord with the enemy and wrest victory is termed spiritual!⁹⁴ Thus [none of] the five phases constantly dominates; the four seasons do not have constant positions; the sun shines for longer and shorter periods; and the moon wanes and waxes."⁹⁵

7. Military Combat⁹⁶

Sun-tzu said:

"In general, the strategy for employing the army is this: [From the time] the general receives his commands from the ruler, unites the armies, and as-

sembles the masses, to confronting the enemy and encamping, there is nothing more difficult than military combat. In military combat what is most difficult is turning the circuitous into the straight, turning adversity into advantage.

"Thus if you make the enemy's path circuitous and entice them with profit, although you set out after them you will arrive before them. This results from knowing the tactics⁹⁷ of the circuitous and the direct.

"Thus combat between armies is advantageous; combat between masses is dangerous.⁹⁸ If the entire army contends for advantage, you will not arrive in time. If you reduce the army's size to contend for advantage, your baggage and heavy equipment will suffer losses.

"For this reason if you abandon your armor [and heavy equipment]⁹⁹ to race forward day and night without encamping, covering two days normal distance at a time, marching forward a hundred *li* to contend for gain, the Three Armies' generals will be captured. The strong will be first to arrive, while the exhausted will follow. With such tactics only one in ten will reach [the battle site]. If one contends for gain fifty *li* away, it will cause the general of the Upper Army to stumble, and by following such tactics half the men will reach [the objective]. If you contend for gain at thirty *li*, then two-thirds of the army will reach [the objective].

"Accordingly, if the army does not have baggage and heavy equipment it will be lost; if it does not have provisions it will be lost; if it does not have stores it will be lost.

Thus one who does not know the plans of the feudal lords cannot prepare alliances beforehand. Someone unfamiliar with the mountains and forests, gorges and defiles, the shape of marshes and wetlands cannot advance the army. One who does not employ local guides cannot gain advantages of terrain.

"Thus the army is established by deceit, moves for advantage, and changes through segmenting and reuniting. Thus its speed is like the wind, its slowness like the forest; its invasion and plundering like a fire;¹⁰⁰ unmoving, it is like the mountains. It is as difficult to know as the darkness; in movement it is like thunder.

"When you plunder a district, divide the wealth among your troops. When you enlarge your territory, divide the profits. Take control of the strategic balance of power [*ch'üan*] and move. The one who first understands the tactics of the circuitous and the direct will be victorious. This is the strategy for military combat.

"The *Military Administration* states: 'Because they could not hear each other they made gongs and drums; because they could not see each other they made pennants and flags.' Gongs, drums, pennants, and flags are the means to unify the men's ears and eyes. When the men have been unified the courageous will not be able to advance alone, the fearful will not be able to retreat alone. This is the method for employing large numbers.

"Thus in night battles make the fires and drums numerous, and in daylight battles make the flags and pennants numerous in order to change the men's ears and eyes.¹⁰¹

"The *ch'i* of the Three Armies can be snatched away; the commanding general's mind can be seized. For this reason in the morning their *ch'i* is ardent; during the day their *ch'i* becomes indolent; at dusk their *ch'i* is exhausted.¹⁰² Thus one who excels at employing the army avoids their ardent *ch'i* and strikes when it is indolent or exhausted. This is the way to manipulate *ch'i*.

"In order await the disordered; in tranquility await the clamorous. This is the way to control the mind.

"With the near await the distant; with the rested await the fatigued; with the sated await the hungry. This is the way to control strength.

"Do not intercept well-ordered flags; do not attack well-regulated formations.¹⁰³ This is the way to control changes.

"Thus the strategy for employing the military: Do not approach high mountains; do not confront¹⁰⁴ those who have hills behind them. Do not pursue feigned retreats. Do not attack animated troops. Do not swallow an

army acting as bait. Do not obstruct an army retreating homeward. If you besiege an army you must leave an outlet.¹⁰⁵ Do not press an exhausted invader. These are the strategies for employing the military."¹⁰⁶

8. Nine Changes¹⁰⁷

Sun-tzu said:

"In general, the strategy for employing the military is this. After the general has received his commands from the ruler, united the armies, and assembled the masses:¹⁰⁸

"Do not encamp on entrapping terrain.¹⁰⁹

"Unite with your allies on focal terrain.¹¹⁰

"Do not remain on isolated terrain.

"Make strategic plans for encircled terrain.

"On fatal terrain you must do battle.¹¹¹

"There are roads that are not¹¹² followed.

"There are armies that are not attacked.

"There are fortified cities that are not assaulted.

"There is terrain for which one does not contend.¹¹³

"There are commands from the ruler which are not accepted.¹¹⁴

"Thus the general who has a penetrating understanding of the advantages of the nine changes knows how to employ the army. If a general does not have a penetrating understanding of the advantages of the nine changes, even though he is familiar with the topography, he will not be able to realize the advantages of terrain.

"One who commands an army but does not know the techniques for the nine changes, even though he is familiar with the five advantages,¹¹⁵ will not be able to control men.

"For this reason the wise must contemplate the intermixture of gain and loss. If they discern advantage [in difficult situations], their efforts can be trusted. If they discern harm [in prospective advantage], difficulties can be resolved.

"Accordingly, subjugate the feudal lords with potential harm; labor the feudal lords with numerous affairs; and have the feudal lords race after profits.

r r r

"Thus the strategy for employing the army: Do not rely on their not coming, but depend on us having the means to await them. Do not rely on their not attacking, but depend on us having an unassailable position.

r r r

"Thus generals have five dangerous [character traits]:

"One committed to dying can be slain.

"One committed to living can be captured.

"One [easily] angered and hasty [to act] can be insulted.

"One obsessed with being scrupulous and untainted can be shamed.

"One who loves the people can be troubled.

"Now these five dangerous traits are excesses in a general, potential disaster for employing the army. The army's destruction and the general's death will invariably stem from these five, so they must be investigated."

9. Maneuvering the Army

Sun-tzu said:

"As for deploying the army and fathoming the enemy:

"To cross mountains follow the valleys, search out tenable ground,¹¹⁶ and occupy the heights. If the enemy holds the heights, do not climb up to engage them in battle. This is the way to deploy an army in the mountains.

"After crossing rivers¹¹⁷ you must distance yourself from them. If the enemy is forging a river to advance, do not confront them in the water. When half their forces have crossed, it will be advantageous to strike them. If you want to engage the enemy in battle, do not array your forces near the river to confront the invader but look for tenable ground and occupy the heights. Do not confront the current's flow.¹¹⁸ This is the way to deploy the army where there are rivers.

"When you cross salt marshes and wetlands, concentrate on quickly getting away from them; do not remain. If you engage in battle in marshes or wetlands, you must stay in areas with marsh grass and keep groves of trees at your back. This is the way to deploy the army in marshes and wetlands.

"On level plains deploy on easy¹¹⁹ terrain with the right flank positioned with high ground to the rear, fatal terrain to the fore, and tenable terrain to the rear. This is the way to deploy on the plains.

"These four [deployments], advantageous to the army, are the means by which the Yellow Emperor conquered the four emperors.¹²⁰

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"Now the army likes heights and abhors low areas, esteems the sunny [yang] and disdains the shady [yin]. It nourishes life and occupies the substantial.¹²¹ An army that avoids the hundred illnesses is said to be certain of victory.¹²²

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"Where there are hills and embankments you must occupy the yang side, keeping them to the right rear. This is to the army's advantage and [exploits the natural] assistance of the terrain.

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"When it rains upstream, foam appears.¹²³ If you want to cross over, wait until it settles.

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"You must quickly get away from deadly configurations of terrain such as precipitous gorges with mountain torrents, Heaven's Well,¹²⁴ Heaven's Jail,¹²⁵ Heaven's Net,¹²⁶ Heaven's Pit,¹²⁷ and Heaven's Fissure.¹²⁸ Do not approach them. When we keep them at a distance, the enemy [is forced to] approach them. When we face them, the enemy [is compelled to] have them at their rear.

r r r

"When on the flanks the army encounters ravines and defiles, wetlands with reeds and tall grass, mountain forests,¹²⁹ or areas with heavy, entangled undergrowth, you must thoroughly search them because they are places where an ambush or spies would be concealed.¹³⁰

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"If [an enemy] in close proximity remains quiet, they are relying on their tactical occupation of ravines.¹³¹ If while far off they challenge you to battle, they want you to advance [because] they occupy easy terrain to their advantage.

"If large numbers of trees move, they are approaching. If there are many [visible] obstacles in the heavy grass, it is to make us suspicious.¹³² If the birds take flight, there is an ambush. If the animals are afraid, [enemy] forces are mounting a sudden attack.

"If dust rises high up in a sharply defined column, chariots are coming. If it is low and broad, the infantry is advancing. If it is dispersed in thin shafts, they are gathering firewood. If it is sparse, coming and going, they are encamping.

"One who speaks deferentially but increases his preparations will advance. One who speaks belligerently and advances hastily will retreat.

"One whose light chariots first fan out to the sides is deploying [for battle].¹³³

"One who seeks peace without setting any prior conditions is [executing] a stratagem.

"One whose troops race off but [who] deploys his army into formation is implementing a predetermined schedule.

"One [whose troops] half advance and half retreat is enticing you.

"Those who stand about leaning on their weapons are hungry. If those who draw water drink first, they are thirsty. When they see potential gain but do not know whether to advance, they are tired.

"Where birds congregate it is empty. If the enemy cries out at night, they are afraid. If the army is turbulent,¹³⁴ the general lacks severity. If their flags and pennants move about, they are in chaos. If the officers are angry, they are exhausted.

"If they kill their horses and eat the meat, the army lacks grain.¹³⁵ If they hang up their cooking utensils and do not return to camp, they are an exhausted invader.¹³⁶

"One whose troops repeatedly congregate in small groups here and there, whispering together, has lost the masses. One who frequently grants rewards is in deep distress. One who frequently imposes punishments is in great diffi-

culty. One who is at first excessively brutal and then fears the masses is the pinnacle of stupidity.¹³⁷

"One who has emissaries come forth with offerings wants to rest for a while.

"If their troops are aroused and approach our forces, only to maintain their positions without engaging in battle or breaking off the confrontation, you must carefully investigate it.

"The army does not esteem the number of troops being more numerous for it only means one cannot aggressively advance.¹³⁸ It is sufficient for you to muster your own strength, analyze the enemy, and take them. Only someone who lacks strategic planning and slights an enemy will inevitably be captured by others.

"If you impose punishments on the troops before they have become attached, they will not be submissive. If they are not submissive, they will be difficult to employ. If you do not impose punishments after the troops have become attached, they cannot be used.

"Thus if you command them with the civil¹³⁹ and unify them through the martial, this is what is referred to as 'being certain to take them.'¹⁴⁰

"If orders are consistently implemented to instruct the people, then the people will submit. If orders are not consistently implemented to instruct the people, then the people will not submit. One whose orders are consistently carried out has established a mutual relationship with the people."

10. Configurations of Terrain¹⁴¹

Sun-tzu said:

"The major configurations [*hsing*] of terrain are accessible, suspended, stalemated, constricted, precipitous, and expansive.

"If we can go forth and the enemy can also advance, it is termed 'accessible.' In an accessible configuration, first occupy the heights and yang [side], and improve the routes for transporting provisions. Then when we engage in battle, it will be advantageous.

"If we can go forth but it will be difficult to return, it is termed 'suspended.'¹⁴² In a suspended configuration, if they are unprepared go forth and conquer them. If the enemy is prepared and we sally forth without being victorious, it will be difficult to turn back and [is] not advantageous.

"If it is not advantageous for us to go forth nor advantageous for the enemy to come forward, it is termed 'stalemated.'¹⁴³ In a stalemated configuration, even though the enemy tries to entice us with profit, we do not go forth. Withdraw [our forces] and depart.¹⁴⁴ If we strike them when half the enemy has come forth, it will be advantageous.

"As for constricted configurations, if we occupy them first we must fully deploy throughout them in order to await the enemy.¹⁴⁵ If the enemy occupies them first and fully deploys in them, do not follow them in. If they do not fully deploy in them, then follow them in.

"As for precipitous configurations,¹⁴⁶ if we occupy them we must hold the heights and yang sides to await the enemy. If the enemy occupies them first, withdraw [our forces] and depart. Do not follow them.

"As for expansive configurations, if our strategic power [*shih*] is equal,¹⁴⁷ it will be difficult to provoke [them to] combat. Engaging in combat will not be advantageous.

"Now these six are the Tao of terrain. Any general who undertakes responsibility for command cannot but investigate them.

"Thus there are [six types of ill-fated] armies: running, lax, sinking, crumbling, chaotic, and routed. Now these six are not disasters brought about by Heaven and Earth but by the general's errors.

"Now if, when their strategic power [*shih*] is equal, one attacks ten, this is called 'running [off].'¹⁴⁸

"If the troops are strong but the officers are weak, it is termed 'lax.'

"If the officers are strong but the troops weak, it is termed 'sinking.'

"If the higher officers are angry and insubordinate, engaging the enemy themselves out of unrestrained anger while the general does not yet know their capability, it is termed 'crumbling.'

"If the general is weak and not strict, unenlightened in his instructions and leadership; the officers and troops lack constant [duties]; and their deployment of troops into formation is askew, it is termed 'chaotic.'

"If the general, unable to fathom the enemy, engages a large number with a small number, attacks the strong with the weak while the army lacks a properly selected vanguard, it is termed 'routed.'

"Now these six are the Tao of defeat. Any general who undertakes responsibility for command cannot but investigate them.

"Configuration of terrain is an aid to the army. Analyzing the enemy, taking control of victory, estimating ravines and defiles, the distant and near, is the Tao of the superior general.¹⁴⁹ One who knows these and employs them in combat will certainly be victorious. One who does not know these nor employ them in combat will certainly be defeated.

"If the Tao of Warfare [indicates] certain victory, even though the ruler has instructed that combat should be avoided, if you must engage in battle it is permissible. If the Tao of Warfare indicates you will not be victorious, even though the ruler instructs you to engage in battle, not fighting is permissible.

"Thus [a general] who does not advance to seek fame, nor [fail to retreat] to avoid [being charged with the capital] offense of retreating, but seeks only to preserve the people and gain advantage for the ruler is the state's treasure.

"When the general regards his troops as young children, they will advance into the deepest valleys with him. When he regards the troops as his beloved children, they will be willing to die with him.¹⁵⁰

"If they are well treated but cannot be employed, if they are loved but cannot be commanded, or when in chaos they cannot be governed, they may be compared to arrogant children and cannot be used.

"If I know our troops can attack, but do not know the enemy cannot be attacked, it is only halfway to victory. If I know the enemy can be attacked, but do not realize our troops cannot attack, it is only halfway to victory.

"Knowing that the enemy can be attacked, and knowing that our army can effect the attack, but not knowing the terrain is not suitable for combat, is only halfway to victory. Thus one who truly knows the army will never be deluded when he moves, never be impoverished when initiating an action.

"Thus it is said if you know them and know yourself, your victory will not be imperiled. If you know Heaven and know Earth, your victory can be complete."¹⁵¹

11. Nine Terrains

Sun-tzu said:

"The strategy for employing the military is [this]: There is dispersive terrain, light terrain, contentious terrain, traversable terrain, focal terrain, heavy terrain, entrapping terrain, encircled terrain, and fatal terrain.¹⁵²

"When the feudal lords fight in their own territory, it is 'dispersive terrain.'¹⁵³

"When they enter someone else's territory, but not deeply, it is 'light terrain.'¹⁵⁴

"If when we occupy it, it will be advantageous to us while if they occupy it, it will be advantageous to them, it is 'contentious terrain.'¹⁵⁵

"When we can go and they can also come, it is 'traversable terrain.'¹⁵⁶

"Land of the feudal lords surrounded on three sides such that whoever arrives first will gain the masses of All under Heaven is 'focal terrain.'¹⁵⁷

"When one penetrates deeply into enemy territory, bypassing numerous cities, it is 'heavy terrain.'¹⁵⁸

"Where there are mountains and forests, ravines and defiles, wetlands and marshes, wherever the road is difficult to negotiate, it is 'entrapping terrain.'¹⁵⁹

"Where the entrance is constricted,¹⁶⁰ the return is circuitous, and with a small number they can strike our masses, it is 'encircled terrain.'¹⁶¹

"Where if one fights with intensity he will survive but if he does not fight with intensity he will perish, it is 'fatal terrain.'¹⁶²

"For this reason on dispersive terrain do not engage the enemy.

"On light terrain do not stop.

"On contentious terrain do not attack.¹⁶³

"On traversable terrain do not allow your forces to become isolated.

"On focal terrain unite and form alliances [with nearby feudal lords].¹⁶⁴

"On heavy terrain plunder for provisions.

"On entrapping terrain move [through quickly].¹⁶⁵

"On encircled terrain use strategy.¹⁶⁶

"On fatal terrain engage in battle.

"In antiquity those who were referred to as excelling in the employment of the army were able to keep the enemy's forward and rear forces from connecting; the many and few from relying on each other; the noble and lowly from coming to each other's rescue; the upper and lower ranks from trusting each other; the troops to be separated, unable to reassemble, or when assembled, not to be well-ordered.¹⁶⁷ They moved when it was advantageous, halted when it was not advantageous.

"If I dare ask, if the enemy is numerous, disciplined, and about to advance, how should we respond to them? I would say, first seize something that they love for then they will listen to you.

"It is the nature of the army to stress speed; to take advantage of the enemy's absence; to travel unanticipated roads; and to attack when they are not alert.

"In general, the Tao of an invader is that when one has penetrated deeply [into enemy territory], the army will be unified, and the defenders will not be able to conquer you.

"If one forages in the fertile countryside, then the Three Armies will have enough to eat. If you carefully nurture them and do not [over-]labor them, their *ch'i* will be united and their strength will be at maximum.

"When you mobilize the army and form strategic plans, you must be unfathomable.

"Cast them into positions from which there is nowhere to go and they will die without retreating. If there is no escape from death, the officers and soldiers will fully exhaust their strength.

"When the soldiers and officers have penetrated deeply into [enemy territory], they will cling together. When there is no alternative, they will fight.

"For this reason even though the soldiers are not instructed, they are prepared; without seeking it, their cooperation is obtained;¹⁶⁸ without covenants they are close together; without issuing orders they are reliable. Prohibit omens, eliminate doubt so that they will die without other thoughts.

"If our soldiers do not have excessive wealth, it is not because they detest material goods. If they do not live long lives,¹⁶⁹ it is not because they abhor longevity. On the day that the orders are issued the tears of the soldiers who are sitting will soak their sleeves, while the tears of those lying down will roll down their cheeks. However, if you throw them into a hopeless situation, they will have the courage of Chu or Kuei.

"Thus one who excels at employing the army may be compared to the *shuaijan* [snake]. The *shuaijan* is found on Mt. Ch'ang. If you strike its head the tail will respond; if you strike its tail the head will respond. If you strike the middle [of the body]¹⁷⁰ both the head and tail will react. If I dare ask, can we make the army like the *shuaijan*, I would say we can. For example, the people of Wu and Yüeh hate each other; but if, when fording a river in the same boat they encounter severe wind, their efforts to rescue each other will be like the left and right hands.

"For this reason fettering the horses¹⁷¹ and burying the chariot wheels are inadequate to rely on [to prevent the soldiers from fleeing]. Unify their courage to be as one through the Tao of administration. Realize the appropriate employment of the hard and soft¹⁷² through the patterns of terrain.

"Thus one who excels at employing the army leads them by the hand as if they were only one man, so they cannot avoid it.

"It is essential for a general to be tranquil and obscure, upright and self-disciplined, and able to stupefy the eyes and ears of the officers and troops, keeping them ignorant.¹⁷³ He alters his management of affairs and changes his strategies to keep other people¹⁷⁴ from recognizing them. He shifts his position and traverses indirect routes to keep other people from being able to anticipate him.

"At the moment the general has designated with them, it will be as if they ascended a height and abandoned their ladders. The general advances with them deep into the territory of the feudal lords and then releases the trigger.¹⁷⁵ He commands them as if racing a herd of sheep—they are driven away, driven back, but no one knows where they are going.

"Assembling the masses of the Three Armies, casting them into danger, is the responsibility of the general.

"The nine transformations of terrain—the advantages deriving from contraction and expansion, the patterns of human emotions—must be investigated.

"In general, the Tao of the invader is [this]:¹⁷⁶

"When the troops have penetrated deeply, they will be unified, but where only shallowly, they will [be inclined to] scatter.

"When [the army] has left the state, crossed the [enemy's] border, and is on campaign, it is 'isolated terrain.'

"When the four sides are open [to others], this is 'focal terrain.'

"When you have advanced deeply, it is 'heavy terrain.'

"If you have penetrated only shallowly, it is 'light terrain.'

"If you have strongholds behind you and constrictions before you, it is 'encircled terrain.'

"If there is no place to go, it is 'fatal terrain.'¹⁷⁷

"For this reason on dispersive terrain I unify their will.

"On light terrain I have them group together.

"On contentious terrain I race our rear elements forward.¹⁷⁸

"On traversable terrain I focus on defense.¹⁷⁹

"On focal terrain I solidify our alliances.¹⁸⁰

"On heavy terrain I ensure a continuous supply of provisions.¹⁸¹

"On entrapping terrain I [speedily] advance along the roads.

"On encircled terrain I obstruct any openings.¹⁸²

"On fatal terrain I show them that we will not live.

"Thus it is the nature of the army to defend when encircled;¹⁸³ to fight fervently when unavoidable; and to follow orders when compelled [by circumstances].

"For this reason one who does not know the plans of the feudal lords cannot forge preparatory alliances. One who does not know the topography of mountains and forests, ravines and defiles, wetlands and marshes cannot maneuver the army. One who does not employ local guides will not secure advantages of terrain. One who does not know one of these four or five cannot [command] the army of a hegemon or a true king.¹⁸⁴

"Now when the army of a hegemon or true king attacks a great state, their masses are unable to assemble. When it applies its awesomeness to the enemy, their alliances cannot be sustained. For this reason it does not contend with any alliances under Heaven.¹⁸⁵ It does not nurture the authority [*ch'üan*] of others under Heaven. Have faith in yourself, apply your awesomeness to the enemy. Then his cities can be taken, his state can be subjugated.

"Bestow rewards not required by law, impose exceptional governmental orders. Direct the masses of the Three Armies as though commanding one man. Press affairs upon them, do not explain the purpose to them. Compel them with [prospects for] profit, but do not inform them about the [potential] harm.

"Cast them into hopeless situations and they will be preserved; have them penetrate fatal terrain and they will live. Only after the masses have penetrated dangerous [terrain] will they be able to craft victory out of defeat.

"The prosecution of military affairs lies in according with and [learning] in detail the enemy's intentions.¹⁸⁶ If one then focuses [his strength] toward the enemy, strikes a thousand *li* away, and kills their general, it is termed 'being skillful and capable in completing military affairs.'

"For this reason on the day the government mobilizes the army, close the passes, destroy all tallies, and do not allow their emissaries to pass through. Hold intense strategic discussions¹⁸⁷ in the upper hall of the temple in order to bring about the execution of affairs.

"If the enemy opens the door, you must race in.

"[Attack] what they love first. Do not fix any time for battle; assess and react to the enemy in order to determine the strategy for battle.

"For this reason at first be like a virgin [at home]; later—when the enemy opens the door—be like a fleeing rabbit. The enemy will be unable to withstand you."

12. Incendiary Attacks

Sun-tzu said:

"There are five types of incendiary attack: The first is to incinerate men, the second to incinerate provisions, the third to incinerate supply trains, the fourth to incinerate armories, and the fifth to incinerate formations.¹⁸⁸

"Implementing an incendiary attack depends on the proper conditions. Equipment for incendiary attack should be fully prepared before required. Launching an incendiary attack has its appropriate seasons, igniting the fire the proper days. As for the seasons, it is the time of the dry spell; as for the day, when the moon is in *chi*, *pi*, *i*, or *chen*. When it is in these four lunar lodges, these are days the wind will arise.

"In general, in incendiary warfare you must respond to the five changes of fire:

"If fires are started within [their camp], then you should immediately respond [with an attack] from outside.

"If fires are ignited but their army remains quiet, then wait; do not attack.

"When they flare into a conflagration, if you can follow up, then do so; if you cannot, then desist.

"If the attack can be launched from outside without relying on inside [assistance], initiate it at an appropriate time.

"If fires are ignited upwind, do not attack downwind.

"Winds that arise in the daytime will persist; those that arise at night will stop.

"Now the army must know the five changes of fire in order to defend against them at the astrologically appropriate times. Thus using fire to aid an attack is enlightened, using water to assist an attack is powerful. Water can be used to sever, but cannot be employed to seize.

"Now if someone is victorious in battle and succeeds in attack but does not exploit the achievement, it is disastrous, and his fate should be termed 'wasteful and tarrying.' Thus it is said the wise general ponders it, the good general cultivates it.

"If it is not advantageous, do not move. If objectives cannot be attained, do not employ the army. Unless endangered do not engage in warfare. The ruler cannot mobilize the army out of personal anger. The general cannot engage in battle because of personal frustration. When it is advantageous, move; when not advantageous, stop. Anger can revert to happiness, annoyance can revert to joy, but a vanquished state cannot be revived, the dead cannot be brought back to life.

"Thus the enlightened ruler is cautious about it, the good general respectful of it. This is the Tao for bringing security to the state and preserving the army intact."

13. Employing Spies

Sun-tzu said:

"When you send forth an army of a hundred thousand on a campaign, marching them out a thousand *li*, the expenditures of the common people

and the contributions of the feudal house will be one thousand pieces of gold per day. Those inconvenienced and troubled both within and without the border, who are exhausted on the road or unable to pursue their agricultural work, will be seven hundred thousand families.

"Armies remain locked in a standoff for years to fight for victory on a single day, yet [generals] begrudge bestowing ranks and emoluments of one hundred pieces of gold and therefore do not know the enemy's situation. This is the ultimate inhumanity. Such a person is not a general for the people, an assistant for a ruler, or the arbiter of victory.

"The means by which enlightened rulers and sagacious generals moved and conquered others, that their achievements surpassed the masses, was advance knowledge.

"Advance knowledge cannot be gained from ghosts and spirits, inferred from phenomena, or projected from the measures of Heaven, but must be gained from men for it is the knowledge of the enemy's true situation.

"Thus there are five types of spies to be employed: local spy, internal spy, turned spy [double agent], dead [expendable] spy, and the living spy. When all five are employed together and no one knows their Tao, this is termed "spiritual methodology." They are a ruler's treasures.

"Local spies—employ people from the local district.

"Internal spies—employ their people who hold government positions.

"Double agents—employ the enemy's spies.

"Expendable spies—are employed to spread disinformation outside the state. Provide our [expendable] spies [with false information] and have them leak it to enemy agents.¹⁸⁹

"Living spies—return with their reports.

"Thus of all the Three Armies' affairs,¹⁹⁰ no relationship is closer than with spies; no rewards are more generous than those given to spies; no affairs are more secret than those pertaining to spies.

"Unless someone has the wisdom of a Sage, he cannot use spies; unless he is benevolent and righteous, he cannot employ spies; unless he is subtle and perspicacious, he cannot perceive the substance in intelligence reports. It is subtle, subtle! There are no areas in which one does not employ spies.

“If before the mission has begun it has already been exposed, the spy and those he informed should all be put to death.

“In general, as for the armies you want to strike, the cities you want to attack, and the men you want to assassinate, you must first know the names of the defensive commander, his assistants, staff, door guards, and attendants. You must have our spies search out and learn them all.

“You must search for enemy agents who have come to spy on us. Tempt them with profits, instruct and retain them. Thus double agents can be obtained and employed. Through knowledge gained from them, you can recruit both local and internal spies. Through knowledge gained from them, the expendable spy can spread his falsehoods, can be used to misinform the enemy. Through knowledge gained from them, our living spies can be employed as times require.

“The ruler must know these five aspects of espionage work. This knowledge inevitably depends on turned spies; therefore, you must be generous to double agents.

“In antiquity, when the Yin arose, they had I Chih in the Hsia. When the Chou arose, they had Lü Ya [the T'ai Kung] in the Yin.¹⁹¹ Thus enlightened rulers and sagacious generals who are able to get intelligent spies will invariably attain great achievements. This is the essence of the military, what the Three Armies rely on to move.”

4

Wu-tzu

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Translator's Introduction

UNLIKE the semilegendary Sun-tzu, Wu Ch'i—who was also called Wu-tzu by later generations—was a famous historical figure. His exploits and achievements, both military and administrative, are portrayed as truly outstanding, and shortly after his death his name became inextricably linked with Sun-tzu's. According to the *Shih chi*, whenever people discussed military theory Sun and Wu were invariably mentioned together, and Ssu-ma Ch'ien's famous biographical chapter permanently canonized that bond.

Wu Ch'i was a complex man of many contradictions, and even his biography in the *Shih chi* does not depict him favorably. He was an extremely talented individual who advocated the fundamental Confucian beliefs, although his behavior visibly contradicted them. He embraced the concept of benevolence as the essential foundation for government, yet he reputedly killed his own wife. He ignored his mother's mourning rites—a heinous offense in Confucian eyes—in order to keep a vow, clearly emphasizing trustworthiness over filial emotion and its respectful expression. Although he attained great power and encouraged the development and preservation of distinctions, he personally eschewed the visible comforts available to a commanding general and shared every misery and hardship with his troops.

Born about 440 B.C. into the tumultuous era that witnessed the initial conflicts of the incessant warfare that eventually reduced the number of powerful states in China from seven to one, Wu Ch'i realized that states could survive only if they fostered both military strength and sound government. As a young man he reportedly studied with two of the founding disciples of Confucianism, perhaps for as long as three years. Subsequently, he journeyed to find a receptive ear, yet lost favor even after great accomplishments. Eventually he was murdered in Ch'u around 361 B.C., a victim of the enmity incurred because of his draconian measures to strengthen the military and the state.

According to subsequent historical writings, not only was Wu Ch'i never defeated in battle but he rarely suffered the ignominy of a stalemate, while

compiling a remarkable record of decisive victories against the superior forces of entrenched states. He has been widely regarded as China's first great general—a view that obviously ignores the T'ai Kung and Ssu-ma Jang-chü—and has been credited with such notable achievements as governing and holding the West Ho region, pacifying Yüeh (the south China region), commanding the forces of Lu to gain an overwhelming victory against Ch'i, leading Wei numerous times to thrash Ch'in's growing power, and stabilizing the government of Ch'u. Thus his views and methods, to the extent that they may be preserved in *Wu-tzu*, are not merely theoretical but were founded and thoroughly tested in reality.

Wu-tzu's reputation for having made impressive administrative contributions—especially for instituting innovative measures and controls to organize the state and instill order, first as Protector of the West River commandery and later as prime minister of Ch'u—have frequently caused him to be ranked with the famous Legalist Lord Shang.¹ Numerous anecdotes describe his emphasis on certitude, one of the few virtues he both espoused and personally embodied. Stories about him abound in works originating in the centuries after his death, such as the *Chan-kuo tse* (*Intrigues of the Warring States*), the *Han Fei-tzu*, and the *Lü-shih Ch'un-ch'iu*.²

The *Wu-tzu* not only constitutes one of the *Seven Military Classics* but also has long been valued as one of the basic foundations of Chinese military thought. Although less strident than the *Art of War*, it seriously considers all aspects of war and battle preparation and suggests generally applicable strategies for resolving certain tactical situations. Over the centuries traditional Confucian scholars—with their classical prejudices toward style and artifice—denigrated the *Wu-tzu* because of the comparative simplicity of the language; they also condemned its realistic policies and perceived brutality.³ However, the text remains lucid and commanding.

The core of the *Wu-tzu* was probably composed by Wu Ch'i himself, then expanded and revised by his disciples—perhaps from their own memories or from court records. Much of the original version appears to have been lost; what remains has been edited into a succinct, fairly systematic, and remarkably comprehensive work. Although earlier versions of the text apparently date back to at least the fourth century B.C., it probably assumed its present form during the Han dynasty. Fortunately, unlike some of the military classics, few textual problems exist, and only small differences are found among the various editions. Naturally, some passages are common to other, presumably later works; but the focus, concepts, and stage of development are distinctly different.⁴

Wu Ch'i's life and values were closely intertwined, and because of his apparent historical importance his biography from the *Shih chi*—which was composed around 100 B.C.—demands inclusion here:⁵

Wu Ch'i, a native of Wey, loved military operations.⁶ He once studied with Tseng-tzu,⁷ then went on to serve the ruler of Lu. When the state of Ch'i attacked Lu, Lu's ruler wanted to commission Wu Ch'i as a general, but since he had taken a woman of Ch'i as his wife,⁸ he was suspicious. Thereupon Wu Ch'i, who wanted to become famous, killed his wife⁹ to show he had no connection with Ch'i. Lu finally appointed him as a general, and in this capacity he attacked Ch'i, destroying their forces.

Someone in Lu who hated Wu Ch'i said to the ruler: "Wu Ch'i is cruel and suspicious. When he was young his family had accumulated a thousand *chin* of gold. He traveled about seeking official appointment but was never successful, eventually exhausting the family's resources. When members of his district laughed at him he killed more than thirty of his detractors and then went east, through the gate of Wey's outer wall. On parting from his mother he bit his arm [so that it bled] and swore an oath: 'Until I become a ranking minister I will not reenter Wey.' Then he went to serve Tseng-tzu. He had only been there a short while when his mother died, but he didn't return home. Tseng-tzu despised him [for failing to perform the mourning rites¹⁰] and severed all relationship with him.

"Wu Ch'i then went to Lu and studied military arts in order to serve you. You doubted his intentions, so he killed his wife to obtain the post of general. Now Lu is a small state, and if it should attain a reputation for being victorious in battle, the other feudal lords will plot against it. Moreover Lu and Wey are brothers, so if you employ Wu Ch'i you will be casting aside Wey."

The ruler grew suspicious of Wu Ch'i and dismissed him.

At that time Wu Ch'i happened to hear that Marquis Wen of Wei¹¹ was a Worthy and wanted so serve in his court. Marquis Wen questioned Li K'o¹² about him: "What sort of a man is Wu Ch'i?" Li K'o replied: "Ch'i is greedy and licentious, but in the employment of troops even the famous general Ssu-ma Jang-chü¹³ could not surpass him." Upon hearing this Marquis Wen appointed him as a general. Wu Ch'i [commanded the army] in an attack on Ch'in, seizing five cities.

In his position as general, Wu Ch'i's custom was to wear the same clothes and eat the same food as the men in the lowest ranks. When sleeping he did not set out a mat, while on the march he did not ride a horse¹⁴ or in a chariot. He personally packed up his leftover rations, and shared all labors and misery with the troops.

Once when one of his soldiers had a blister, he personally sucked out the pus for him. The soldier's mother heard about it and wept. Someone said to her:

"Your son is only an ordinary soldier, while the general himself sucked out the pus. What is there to weep about?" The mother retorted: "That isn't it. In years past Duke Wu sucked his father's blister. His father went to war without hesitating and subsequently died at the hands of the enemy. Now Duke Wu again sucks my son's blister, so I don't know where he will die. For this reason I weep."¹⁵

Because Marquis Wen felt that Wu Ch'i excelled in employing the army, was scrupulous and fair-handed, and able to obtain the complete allegiance of his troops, he appointed him as Protector of the West River¹⁶ commandery to fend off the states of Ch'in and Han.

When Marquis Wen died Wu Ch'i continued to serve his son, Marquis Wu. Marquis Wu voyaged by boat down the West River. In midstream he looked back and exclaimed to Wu Ch'i: "Isn't it magnificent! The substantiality of the mountains and rivers, this is the jewel of Wei." Wu Ch'i replied: "[The real jewel] lies in Virtue, not in precipitous defiles. Formerly the Three Miao had Tung-t'ing Lake on the left and P'eng-li Lake on the right, but they didn't cultivate Virtue and righteousness and Yü obliterated them. The place where Chieh of the Hsia dynasty resided had the Yellow and Chi rivers on the left, Mt. T'ai and Mt. Hua on the right, the cliffs of I-ch'üeh in the south, and the slopes of Yang-ch'ang to the north. But in his practice of government he didn't cultivate benevolence, and T'ang displaced him. The state of [the tyrant] Chou of the Yin dynasty had Mt. Meng-men on the left, Mt. T'ai-hang on the right, Mt. Ch'ang to the north, and the great Yellow River flowing to the south, but in his practice of government he didn't cultivate Virtue, and King Wu killed him. From this perspective [the state's jewel] is Virtue, not the precipitousness of its defiles. If you do not cultivate Virtue, all the men in the boat will comprise an enemy state."¹⁷ "Excellent!" said Marquis Wu. Thereupon he enfeoffed Wu Ch'i as Protector of the West River commandery, and his reputation grew enormously.

Wei then established the post of Minister, naming T'ien Wen to the office. Wu Ch'i was unhappy so he accosted T'ien Wen: "Could we please discuss merit and attainments?" T'ien Wen agreed. Wu Ch'i asked: "Who is better at commanding the Three Armies, causing the officers and soldiers to take pleasure in dying in battle, and ensuring that enemy states do not dare plot against us—you or me?" "I am not as capable as you," T'ien Wen replied. Wu Ch'i then asked him: "Who is better, you or I, in administering the bureaucracy, gaining the support of the people, and filling the storehouses and arsenals?" T'ien Wen again replied: "I am not as good as you." "In serving as Protector of the West River commandery so that the Ch'in troops dare not establish villages in their eastern regions, while Han and Chao act submissively as honored guests, who is better?" T'ien Wen acknowledged: "You are." Wu Ch'i then proceeded: "In all three of these you are inferior to me, yet your position has been placed above me. Why?" T'ien Wen said: "The ruler is young, the state doubtful, the major ministers not yet supportive, while the common people¹⁸ do not trust [the government]. At this time should the role fall to you or to me?" After Ch'i was silent for a very long

time he said: "It should belong to you. This is why I am placed over you." Wu Ch'i then knew he was not as good as T'ien Wen.

After T'ien Wen died Kung Shu became Minister. He had married a princess of Wei and [wanted to] damage Wu Ch'i. Kung Shu's servant said to him: "It is easy to get rid of Wu Ch'i." Kung Shu asked how, and his servant replied: "Wu Ch'i is constrained, incorruptible, and likes fame. First you should accordingly say to Marquis Wu: 'Wu Ch'i is a Worthy while your state is small. Moreover you have a border area of fertile land abutting the strong state of Ch'in. Therefore I fear Wu Ch'i will not remain loyal.' The marquis will then ask: 'What should we do,' and you should say: 'Test him by extending [an offer of marriage] with a princess. If Ch'i intends to stay he will certainly accept her; if not he will invariably decline. With this divine his intent.' Then you should summon Wu Ch'i and return with him, while also making the princess angry so that she treats you contemptuously. When Wu Ch'i sees that the princess holds you in contempt, he will certainly decline her."

Thereupon, when Wu Ch'i saw the princess treat the Minister of Wei contemptuously, he did in fact decline Marquis Wu's offer. Marquis Wu grew suspicious and did not trust him any longer. Wu Ch'i, fearing he might be charged with some offense, subsequently left and went to the state of Ch'u.

King Tao of Ch'u had previously heard that Wu Ch'i was a Worthy, so when he arrived he appointed him as Minister. Wu Ch'i made the laws clear, examined the ordinances, eliminated unimportant offices, and dispersed distant royal relatives in order to nourish and support fighting men. He emphasized strengthening the army and destroying the vociferous proponents of the horizontal and vertical alliances.¹⁹ To the south he pacified the Pai Yüeh. In the north he seized Ch'en and Ts'ai and forced the Three Chin to withdraw. To the west he [successfully] attacked Ch'in. The other feudal lords were troubled by Ch'u's growing strength, while all the members of the royal family wanted to harm him. When King Tao died the imperial relatives and chief ministers revolted and attacked Wu Ch'i. He ran to the king's body and hid beneath it. When his assailants shot their arrows, striking him, they thereby struck King Tao as well.

When King Tao had been buried and the prince enthroned, he had the Minister of Justice execute all those who had shot at Wu Ch'i and also struck the king's corpse. Those that were judged guilty and executed, together with having their families exterminated, numbered more than seventy.²⁰

The Grand Historian says: "The habit of the contemporary age, when referring to armies and regiments, is to always speak of Sun-tzu's thirteen chapters and Wu Ch'i's strategy. At this time many [people] have them. Thus I have not discussed them but instead discussed what their actions effected and established. There is a common saying: 'One able to perform an action cannot invariably speak about it; one able to speak about something is not invariably able to perform it.' Sun Pin's plotting of strategy against P'ang Chüan was enlightened, but he was still unable to extricate himself from the misfortune of suffering severe

corporeal punishment.²¹ Wu Ch'i [tried to] persuade Marquis Wen that the strategic advantages of power [conferred by the substantiality of the terrain's] configuration are not as good as Virtue. However, his actions in Ch'u, on account of his harsh oppressiveness and the paucity of his beneficence, caused him to lose his life. Isn't it tragic!"

Even in death Wu Ch'i managed to execute a successful strategy and gain revenge because he knew that in trying to kill him, his enemies would desecrate the king's body and eventually be executed.

Modern scholars such as Chauncey Goodrich, troubled by the inclusion of such detrimental material as Wu Ch'i killing his wife, have studied the biography in considerable detail and concluded that it is an amalgamation of the disparate, even condemnatory materials probably available to the Grand Historian.²² Opinion is divided about Wu Ch'i's overall historical accomplishments, with much of the biographical record being viewed as romantic embellishment, anachronistic, or simply dubious. However, given the numerous references to Wu-tzu in the extant literature from the two centuries following his death, it seems likely that Wu Ch'i served in the capacities enumerated and was a highly effective strategist and commander. A brief consideration of the more significant stories and anecdotes in these other writings not only provides information about the man and his character but also indicates the important principles generally associated with his name that are illustrated prominently by his lifelong behavior.

Wu Ch'i, who is often mentioned with Lord Shang as emphasizing the role of law and revising government policies to strengthen the state, valued credibility (which can only be established through preserving one's word in complete sincerity) above everything. An anecdote preserved in the *Han Fei-tzu*, followed by Han Fei-tzu's comments, portrays this paramount commitment:

Wu Ch'i went out and happened to encounter an old friend. He stopped him and invited him to eat dinner with him. The friend replied: "I will. In a short time I will go back and eat with you." Wu-tzu said: "I will wait for you to dine." By nightfall the friend had not come, but Wu Ch'i waited for him without eating. Early the next morning he had someone seek out his friend, and only when the friend had come back did he eat with him.

[Han Fei-tzu's comment:] When small acts of faith are achieved, great faith is established. Therefore the wise ruler accumulates good faith. When rewards and punishments are not trusted, prohibitions and ordinances will not be effected. The explanation is seen in Duke Wen attacking Yüan and Chi Cheng rescuing the starving. For this reason Wu Ch'i waited for his friend to eat.²³

Another incident from the *Han Fei-tzu* portrays Wu Ch'i as divorcing his wife for a minor transgression (rather than killing her, as reported in the *Shih*

chi biography) in order to preserve his credibility. His brother-in-law rationalizes this action in terms of a zealous commitment to the law:

Wu Ch'i, who was a native of Tso-shih in Wey, had his wife weave a silk band. When he measured it and found it to be narrower than desired, he had her change it. "I will," she said. When it was complete he measured it again, but the result was still not accurate. Wu Ch'i was enraged. His wife replied: "When I began I set the warp, and it could not be changed." Wu-tzu sent her away. She then asked her older brother to seek her readmission, but her brother said: "Wu Ch'i is a man of law. He works with the laws so that he may attain great achievements in a large state. Therefore he must first put the laws into practice with his wife, and thereafter implement them [in government]. You have no hope of seeking to return." His wife's younger brother was well-favored by Wey's ruler, so she sought the ruler's intercession with Wu-tzu on her behalf. Wu-tzu did not listen but instead left Wey and went to Ching [Ch'u].²⁴

Yet another version of the story perceives her dismissal as resulting from working too assiduously, thereby surpassing—rather than falling short of—what Wu Ch'i had required:

Wu Ch'i, showing his wife a silk band, said: "Weave a silk band for me, making it like this." When it was finished he compared them, and the one she had made was especially good. Wu Ch'i said: "I had you weave a silk band, to make it like this one, but now this is especially good. How is that?" His wife replied: "The materials employed are alike, but I concentrated on making it better." Wu Ch'i said: "It is not what I said to do." He had her change her clothes and return [to her family]. Her father went to request [that he take her back], but Wu Ch'i said: "In the Ch'i family there are no empty words!"²⁵

This explanation is in full accord with the Legalist emphasis on not exceeding one's prescribed role, which is generally proclaimed a canonical virtue by military thinkers within the context of battlefield situations.

Another cardinal doctrine of the strategists is the inviolate nature of rewards and punishments because they embody and symbolize the credibility of the administrative system. To motivate men successfully requires not only both rewards and punishments but also the absolute certainty that these will invariably be implemented in every single instance. Wu-tzu believed unflinchingly in the power of the "twin handles," as Lord Shang termed them, and especially in the ability of rewards to motivate men so strongly that they would risk their lives and chance everything. Although instruction, organization, training, and the development of a sense of shame should precede any manipulation of the human spirit, the underlying effect of credibility in attaining a desired objective is well illustrated by the following incident:

When Wu Ch'i was serving as Protector of the West River commandery, [the state of Ch'in] had a small fortified watchtower near the border. Wu Ch'i wanted to attack it for if he did not eliminate it, it would be extremely harmful to the farmers. However, it was not worth summoning armored troops to eliminate it. Therefore he leaned a carriage shaft against the North Gate and issued an ordinance which stated: "Anyone who can move this outside the South Gate will be rewarded with superior lands and an excellent house." For a while no one moved it, then someone did succeed in moving it. Upon his return [from the South Gate], Wu Ch'i rewarded him in accord with the ordinance. Shortly thereafter he set a picul of red beans outside the East Gate and issued an ordinance which stated: "Anyone able to move this outside the West Gate will be rewarded as in the first case." The people competed to move it. Then Wu Ch'i sent down an order: "Tomorrow when we attack the tower, whoever can ascend it first will be [enfeoffed as *ta-fu*²⁶] and rewarded with superior lands and a house." The people fought to race to the tower, attacking and seizing it in a single morning.²⁷

The *Shih chi* biography states that Wu Ch'i studied with Tseng-tzu; however, because this is chronologically impossible, it was probably Tseng-tzu's son Tseng Shen, with whom Wu Ch'i may have studied for as long as three years.²⁸ If the biography is credible and Tseng Shen condemned Wu Ch'i for blatantly violating the precepts of filial behavior—one of the cornerstones of Tseng-tzu's recension of Confucianism—Wu Ch'i may have rejected formal studies in favor of military pursuits, which were presumably his first inclination. However, throughout the *Wu-tzu* he advocates policies based on four fundamental Confucian virtues: benevolence, righteousness, the forms of propriety (*li*), and the Way (Tao) of Heaven. This accords with the new reality of the Warring States period wherein state governments had become significantly dependent on the willing consent and participation of the populace in any military enterprise.²⁹ The famous (probably fabricated) discussion with Marquis Wu while they were floating down the West River, which is recorded in other texts as well, clearly expresses Wu Ch'i's belief in Virtue rather than in simple strategic advantage. Another interview with the marquis at the start of his reign reflects the same concern, but it is coupled with an advocacy of practicing accessible government while retaining political power and preventing the nobles from encroaching on the people:

Marquis Wu asked Wu-tzu about the initial reign year. Wu-tzu replied: "It is said that the ruler of a state must be cautious about the beginning." "How does one go about being cautious about the beginning?" "Make it upright." "How does one make it upright?" "Make wisdom enlightened. If wisdom is not enlightened, how can you perceive the upright? Listen widely and select from what you hear so as to make wisdom enlightened. For this reason in antiquity, when the ruler

first held court, the *ta-fu* each had one speech, the officers one audience, and if the common people requested admittance they would be heard. If the nobles made any inquiries they would certainly be answered, and they would not refuse any who came from the four quarters. This can be termed 'not plugged up or obscured.' In apportioning salaries they made certain to extend them to everyone, while in the employment of punishments they were invariably accurate. The ruler's mind had to be benevolent. He thought of the ruler's profit and the elimination of the people's harm. This can be termed 'not losing the people.' The ruler personally had to be upright, the intimate ministers carefully selected. The *ta-fu* could not hold more than one office concurrently, while the handles for controlling the people did not lie with one clan. This can be referred to as 'not [losing] the balance of authority [*ch'üan*] and strategic power [*shih*].' This is the meaning of the *Spring and Autumn Annals* and the basis of the initial reign year."³⁰

A dramatic passage in the *Lü-shih Ch'un-ch'iu* describes Wu Ch'i's prophetic words as he departed from Wei, providing another version of the story of slander incorporated in the *Shih chi* biography:

When Wu Ch'i governed the area outside the West River, Wang Ts'o slandered him to Marquis Wu of Wei. Marquis Wu had an emissary summon him. When Wu Ch'i reached the gate on the far shore, he stopped the carriage and rested. As he looked toward the West River, several tears fell from his eyes. His servant addressed him: "I have observed your intentions. You have cast aside the world as if throwing away a pair of straw sandals. Yet now as you leave the West River region you weep. Why is it?" Wu Ch'i wiped the tears away and replied: "You do not understand. If the ruler truly knew me and had me exhaust my abilities, Ch'in could certainly be destroyed, and with the West River region he could become a true king. But now the ruler listens to the ideas of slanderers and does not know me. It will not be long before the West River region belongs to Ch'in. From henceforth the state of Wei will diminish." Wu Ch'i subsequently left Wei and entered Ch'u. Day by day Wei diminished while Ch'in grew greater every day. This is what Wu Ch'i saw first and wept about.³¹

Wu Ch'i's radical, emotional commitment to his political beliefs and his desire to exert himself on behalf of the state clearly manifest themselves in such passages.

Several incidents provide glimpses of Wu Ch'i's activities in Ch'u, apparently confirming that King Tao quickly entrusted him with power and influence. Seeking to strengthen the central government and thereby the state and the army, Wu Ch'i proposed policies that invariably antagonized entrenched interests:

Formerly, Wu Ch'i instructed King Tao of Ch'u about Ch'u's customs. "The chief ministers are too powerful, the hereditary lords too numerous. In this sort

of situation, above they press upon the ruler while below they oppress the people. This is the Way [Tao] to impoverish the state and weaken the army. It would be better to take back all ranks and emoluments from the hereditary lords after three generations; diminish the salaries and allowances of the hundred officials; and reduce all unnecessary offices in order to support selected, well-trained officers." King Tao had implemented his suggestion for a year when he died. Wu Ch'i was then torn apart in Ch'u.³²

Another version of the story in the *Lü-shih Ch'un-ch'iu* (which dates from the third century B.C.) provides a further explanation of Wu Chi's policy to populate the countryside and emasculate the power of the stagnant nobility:

Wu Ch'i addressed the King of Ch'u: "What Ch'u has a surplus of is land, but what is insufficient is people. Now if your lordship takes what is insufficient to increase what is in surplus, then I cannot do anything." Thereupon the king ordered the nobles to go out and fill the vast, empty lands. They all found this to be extremely bitter. When the king of Ch'u died, the nobles all came [to the capital]. The king's corpse was lying in the upper hall. The nobles, acting together, shot arrows at Wu Ch'i. Wu Ch'i yelled: "I will show you how I use weapons." He pulled out an arrow and ran. Prostrating himself over the corpse, he stuck the arrow in and yelled out: "The ministers are revolting against the king!" Then Wu Ch'i died. However, according to Ching law anyone who exposed a weapon before the king's body should be subject to the severest penalty, with the extirpation of their families to three degrees. Wu Ch'i's wisdom can certainly be said to have been acute.³³

Chinese tradition has long held that the military arts belong to the category "contrary Virtue," a concept perhaps originally espoused by the mythical Lao-tzu and later expounded in many of the military writings, including the *Wu-tzu*.³⁴ Consequently, the longer one's involvement and the more extensive one's experience, the more likely it becomes that disaster will befall the individual. This is made clear in two fictional interviews found in the *Shuo yüan*:

When Wu Ch'i was serving as Protector of Yüan, during his tour of inspection of the commandery he reached Hsi where he asked Ch'ü I-chiu: "The king, not knowing that I am a petty man, has made me Protector of Yüan. Sir, how would you instruct me?" Duke Ch'ü did not reply.

After a year the king made him Director of Ordinances. During his tour of inspection of the commandery he reached Hsi. He asked Ch'ü I-chiu: "I inquired of you, but you did not instruct me. Now the king, not knowing I am a petty man, has made me Director of Ordinances. Sir, would you examine how I am acting?" Duke Ch'ü said: "What are you going to do?" Wu Ch'i said: "I am going to level the ranks of nobility in Ch'u and even their emoluments; reduce

what is in excess and continue what is insufficient; and polish the armor and weapons in order to contend for All under Heaven at the appropriate time." Duke Ch'ü said: "I have heard that in the past, those that excelled at governing states did not change the old nor alter the usual. Now you are about to level the ranks of Ch'u's nobility and even their emoluments, reduce what is surplus and continue what is insufficient. This is changing the old and altering the usual. Moreover I have heard that weapons are inauspicious implements and that conflict is a contrary Virtue. Now you secretly plot the contrary Virtue and love to employ inauspicious implements. Reaching out for what men abandon is the extreme of contrariness; implementing licentious and dissolute affairs is not advantageous. Moreover when you employed the troops of Lu, you should not have gained your intentions in Ch'i, but you realized them. When you employed the troops of Wei, you should not have been able to realize your intentions against Ch'in, but you gained them. I have heard it said, 'If one is not the man for disaster, he cannot complete disaster.' I formerly found it strange that my ruler had frequently acted contrary to the Way [Tao] of Heaven but up to now not met with any misfortune. Alas, it was probably waiting for you." Wu Ch'i fearfully said: "Can it still be altered?" Duke Ch'ü said: "It cannot." Wu Ch'i said: "I plan on behalf of others." Duke Ch'ü said: "A prisoner whose punishment has been determined cannot change himself. You would best be honest and sincerely implement [the affairs of government] for the state of Ch'u has nothing more valued than raising up the worthy."³⁵

From a historical perspective that had witnessed Ch'in's slow evolution to power and subsequent meteoric collapse, the milieu that saw the rise of state Confucianism and the pervasive expression of Taoism in such syncretic texts as the *Huai-nan tzu* gave voice to a condemnatory view:

On behalf of Ch'in, Lord Shang instituted the mutual guarantee laws, and the hundred surnames were resentful. On behalf of Ch'u, Wu Ch'i issued orders to reduce the nobility and their emoluments, and the meritorious ministers revolted. Lord Shang, in establishing laws, and Wu Ch'i, in employing the army, were the best in the world. But Lord Shang's laws [eventually] caused the loss of Ch'in for he was perspicacious about the traces of the brush and knife,³⁶ but did not know the foundation of order and disorder. Wu Ch'i, on account of the military, weakened Ch'u. He was well practiced in such military affairs as deploying formations, but did not know the balance of authority [*ch'üan*] involved in court warfare.³⁷

From such passages it appears that Wu Ch'i actually wielded significant political power and tried to implement typically Legalist reforms. Determining whether he enjoyed such influence in Wei's central government is more problematic because although Li K'o and other ministers apparently embarked on similar programs, Wu Ch'i's administrative impact and power were prob-

ably confined to the West River region, where he may have been virtual dictator.

Fundamental Concepts and Strategies

The present text of the *Wu-tzu* consists of six chapters focusing on topics critical to military affairs: Planning for the State; Evaluating the Enemy; Controlling the Army; the Tao of the General; Responding to Change; and Stimulating the Officers. Although none of the sections concentrates solely on a single topic because strategic considerations are interspersed throughout, these traditional chapter headings essentially depict the scope of the respective subject matter.

Need for Military Forces

Wu Ch'i lived during the period in which warfare was becoming increasingly specialized, bronze weapons had attained the peak of their development, and bronze swords and numerous iron weapons had begun to appear. Chariots—which were still manned by three men (driver, bowman, and spearman) and drawn by four horses—theoretically continued to provide the fundamental offensive weapon, although they were diminishing in effectiveness and were perhaps being relegated to functioning as transport and as a command platform.³⁸ Use of crossbows had just become widespread, and armies were now composed of conscripted commoners and the *shih* (knights, who were now officers), who had previously shouldered the burden of fighting.

However brief the time of Wu Ch'i's devotion to formal Confucian studies, it apparently constituted a formative period during which he absorbed the fundamental beliefs he later propounded as essential to good government. However, although he was a strong proponent of benevolence and righteousness, Wu-tzu equally stressed military strength and preparation. Without an effective fighting force, the Confucian virtues would become hollow mockeries and evil would dominate the world:

In antiquity the ruler of the Ch'eng Sang clan cultivated Virtue but neglected military affairs, thereby leading to the extinction of his state. The ruler of the Yu Hu clan relied on his masses and loved courage and thus lost his ancestral altars. The enlightened ruler, observing this, will certainly nourish culture and Virtue within the domestic sphere while, in response to external situations, putting his military preparations in order. Thus when opposing an enemy if you do not advance, you have not attained righteousness. When the dead lie stiff and you grieve for them, you have not attained benevolence. ["Planning for the State"]

Accordingly, the commanding general must be selected carefully and must be a man of complete and diverse talents who is capable of effectively directing both military and civilian administrations. Naturally, courage is basic, but other characteristics—such as wisdom and self-control—are emphatically required.

Measure in All Matters

In Wu-tzu's era the army depended heavily on the horse for its overall mobility and for powering its focal assault weapon, the chariot. Consequently, Wu Ch'i stressed that the enlightened management of horses was primary and that men were secondary. However, certain vital principles apply to both, such as ensuring proper nourishment and appropriate eating times, adequate rest periods, the erection of temporary shelters, and the implementation of extensive, ongoing training. All the equipment for the army, and especially that for the horses, must be of good quality and kept in proper repair. Only then would the army be adequately prepared for its mission and the men given the means to execute their orders without the distraction and hindrance of material failure.

People as the Basis

Because of the shift from warfare fought by the nobility to mass mobilization and reliance on a basically civilian army, the strong support and willing allegiance of the people became essential. Wu Ch'i therefore advocated enlightened Confucian policies that would provide the people with adequate material welfare, gain their emotional support, and inculcate the basic virtues. When impositions are light and the government visibly expresses its concern for the people, the populace will respond and the state can withstand external challenges. Harmony—which can then be forged—must be present in the state, the army, the formations, and among the men themselves.

Training and Unification

Harmony and organization are counterparts: Without harmony the organization will not be cohesive, but without organization harmony is ineffectual. Wu Ch'i only briefly touched on the civilian hierarchy necessary to provide this basic organization; he mainly emphasized the need for order and distinctions and urged the selection and appointment of worthy men. Self-reliance on the part of those at the pinnacle of government can only lead to disaster, whereas accepting wise counsel results in victory.

The means required to attain a disciplined, effective fighting force are quite simple: Organize properly, train extensively, and motivate thoroughly.

Thereafter it becomes a question of strategy and tactics, and most of Wu Ch'i's book is devoted to military matters such as the composition of units, methods of control, formations, and the selection of men. He also focuses on general questions of training based on the traditional composition of the Three Armies and their employment in normal formations. Repetitive training furnishes the means for coordinated, articulated movement on the battlefield. Solidarity provides the possibility of effecting strategy, whereas disorder dooms one's tactics and turns the conflict into a shambles. A small, well-disciplined force can usually defeat a numerically superior one if the latter lacks cohesion and direction. All the forces should be completely integrated and immediately responsive to the commands of one man. Then the army will not succumb to battle pressure but will emerge victorious.

Selection, Evaluation, and Motivation of Men

Men should be selected, evaluated, and assigned duties including both combat specialties and administrative positions, that are appropriate to their individual talents and expertise. Because attitude and motivation are critical, Wu-tzu suggested policies that would consciously employ his psychological insights to forge a spirited fighting force. Given a settled, well-treated populace, the essential catalyst would be shame because men striving to avoid shame would prefer death in battle to living ignominiously. On the positive side, being committed to fighting and to dying in battle would ensure the survival not only of the individual soldier but of the entire army.

In contrast to the famous Legalist thinkers of the Warring States period, Wu-tzu felt that by themselves, rewards and punishments would be unreliable and inadequate to guarantee discipline and elicit the desired forms of behavior. Excessive rewards could easily prove counterproductive, encouraging individual rather than coherent unit action, stimulating the soldiers to break ranks in their personal quests for glory and profit. The imposition of extremely strict punishments to constrain discontent would ultimately prove similarly ineffective because the offenders would simply flee rather than face the painful consequences of failure or defeat. Only when all measures were properly implemented—including honoring and sustaining the families of those who died in combat—would a disciplined, spirited, strongly motivated force result.

Waging War and Engaging in Battle

The key to victory is impartially assessing the situation, including relative strength, to discern and develop potential tactical advantages. Wu Ch'i provides extensive instructions and techniques for evaluating the enemy and its

commander and correlates national character with fighting qualities. He also analyzes general classes of battlefield situations in terms of their potential, elucidating a series in which superiority dictates attacking and another in which withdrawing and defending are advisable. Finally, he considers a number of circumstances in which the enemy either enjoys a significant advantage or encounters difficulty due to terrain, weather, or other adverse conditions; and he recommends countermeasures.

Deviations from the standards of good order, training, material supply, and similar factors create the requisite opening for attack. Any sign of internal disorder or disaffection, any character flaw or excessive strength in an enemy commander promises an exploitable opportunity. Spies should ferret out vital information, and probing attacks should be undertaken to discover the enemy's tactics and degree of integrity. Probable combat behavior can be extrapolated from national character and regional differences, and tactics can be developed for predictable responses.

Some circumstances—such as confronting an exhausted enemy—are remarkably clear and require that the commander initiate aggressive movements without hesitation, whereas others indicate that engaging the enemy would be folly. The well-ordered, rested, integrated, entrenched, and properly commanded forces of an enemy state are to be avoided until feints, deception, and other techniques can be brought to bear. Certain types of terrain and disadvantageous circumstances should also be treated with caution unless they can be turned to advantage. Armies that are outnumbered or in difficulty must make every effort to utilize the natural advantages of confined terrain, inclement weather, and water.

1. Planning for the State

Wu Ch'i, wearing the distinctive garb of a Confucian, had an audience with Marquis Wen of Wei to discuss the strategic crux of warfare. Marquis Wen said: "I do not like military affairs."

Wu Ch'i replied: "From the visible I can fathom the concealed. From the past I can discern the future. How can your lordship say this topic does not accord with his thoughts? Right now, throughout the four seasons you have the skins of slaughtered animals covered with vermillion lacquer, painted with variegated colors, and embellished with glistening images of rhinoceroses and elephants. Wearing them in winter one would not be warm; wearing them in summer one would not be cool.

"You make long spear-tipped halberds of twenty-four feet and short spear-tipped halberds of twelve feet. Your leather armored chariots block the doors; their wheels are covered and the hubs protected.¹ Looking at them they are certainly not beautiful to the eye; riding in them to hunt they are certainly not mobile. I do not know how you use them!

"If you are preparing them to advance into battle or withdraw and protect [the state] without seeking men capable of employing them, the situation is comparable to a nesting hen rushing at a fox or a puppy attacking a tiger. Even though they have great fighting spirit, they will die!

"In antiquity the ruler of the Ch'eng Sang clan cultivated Virtue but neglected military affairs, thereby leading to the extinction of his state. The ruler of the Yu Hu clan relied on his masses and loved courage and thus lost his ancestral altars. The enlightened ruler, observing this, will certainly nourish culture and Virtue within the domestic sphere while, in response to external situations, putting his military preparations in order. Thus when opposing an enemy force if you do not advance, you have not attained righteousness. When the dead lie stiff and you grieve for them, you have not attained benevolence."

Thereupon Marquis Wen personally arranged a mat for Wu Ch'i, and his wife presented him with a goblet of wine. The duke then made a sacrifice in the ancestral temple, announcing his intended employment of Wu Ch'i, and posted him as general-in-chief to protect the West River commandery. While

in command he fought seventy-six major battles with the other feudal lords, winning sweeping victories in sixty-four of them and faring no worse than a draw in the remainder. He expanded Wei's land in all four directions, broadening its territory some thousand *li*. All these were Wu Ch'i's accomplishments.

Wu-tzu said: "In antiquity those who planned government affairs would invariably first instruct the hundred surnames and gain the affection of the common people.

"There are four disharmonies. If there is disharmony in the state, you cannot put the army into the field. If there is disharmony within the army, you cannot deploy into formations. If you lack harmony within the formations, you cannot advance into battle. If you lack cohesion during the conduct of the battle, you cannot score a decisive victory.²

"For this reason when a ruler who has comprehended the Way [Tao] is about to employ his people, he will first bring them into harmony, and only thereafter embark on great affairs. He will not dare rely solely on his own plans, but will certainly announce them formally in the ancestral temple, divine their prospects by the great tortoise shell, and seek their confirmation in Heaven and the seasons. Only if they are all auspicious will he proceed to mobilize the army.³

"Because the people know the ruler values their lives and is sorrowed by their deaths, when such circumstances arise and they must confront danger with him, the officers will consider death while advancing glorious, but life gained through retreating disgraceful."

Wu-tzu said: "Now the Way [Tao] is the means by which one turns back to the foundation and returns to the beginning. Righteousness is the means by which to put affairs into action and realize accomplishments. Plans are the means by which to keep harm distant and gain profit. The essence [provides the constraints] by which to preserve duty and conserve achievements. Now if behavior does not accord with the Way [Tao], and actions do not accord with righteousness, but instead one dwells in magnificence and enjoys nobility, disaster will inevitably befall him.

"For this reason the Sage rests the people in the Way [Tao], orders them with righteousness, moves them with the forms of propriety [*li*], and consoles them with benevolence. Cultivate these four virtues and you will flourish. Neglect them and you will decline.

"Thus when Ch'eng T'ang extirpated the evil tyrant Chieh, Chieh's people rejoiced, and when King Wu of Chou attacked the vile King Chou [of the Yin dynasty], the people of Yin did not condemn him. Because their actions accorded with Heaven and Man, they were able to succeed."

Wu-tzu said: "In general to govern the state and order the army, you must instruct them with the forms of propriety [*li*], stimulate them with righteousness, and cause them to have a sense of shame. For when men have a sense of shame, in the greatest degree it will be sufficient to wage war, while in the least degree it will suffice to preserve the state."⁴

"Now being victorious in battle is easy, but preserving the results of victory is difficult."⁵ Thus it is said that among the states under Heaven that engage in warfare, those that garner five victories will meet with disaster; those with four victories will be exhausted; those with three victories will become hegemony; those with two victories will be kings; and those with one victory will become emperors. For this reason those who have conquered the world through numerous victories are extremely rare, while those who thereby perished are many."

Wu-tzu said: "In general the reasons troops are raised are five: to contend for fame; to contend for profit; from accumulated hatreds; from internal disorder; and from famine. The names [of the armies⁶] are also five: 'righteous army,' 'strong army,' 'hard army,' 'fierce army,' and 'contrary army.' Suppressing the violently perverse and rescuing the people from chaos is termed 'righteousness.' Relying on [the strength of] the masses to attack is termed 'strong.' Mobilizing the army out of anger is termed 'hard.' Abandoning the forms of propriety [*li*] and greedily seeking profit is termed 'fierce.' While the country is in turmoil and the people are exhausted, embarking on military campaigns and mobilizing the masses is termed 'contrary.' These five each have an appropriate Way [Tao]. In the case of the righteous you must use propriety to subjugate them. Toward the strong you must be deferential to subjugate them. Against the hard you must use persuasive language to subjugate them. Against the fierce you must employ deceit to subjugate them. Against the contrary you must use the tactical balance of power [*ch'üan*] to subjugate them."

Marquis Wu asked: "Could I hear about the Way [Tao] for ordering the troops, evaluating⁷ men, and making the state secure?" Wu Ch'i replied:

"The enlightened kings of antiquity always exerted every effort to maintain the forms of propriety [*li*] between themselves and their ministers, manifest the distinctions of rank, settle and assemble the officials and people, accord with their customs to instruct them, and select and recruit the talented in order to prepare for the unexpected.

"In the past Duke Huan of Ch'i⁸ enlisted the support of fifty thousand men and thereby attained hegemony over the feudal lords. Duke Wen of Chin summoned forty thousand men to serve as his lead troops and thereafter realized his intention [of becoming hegemon]. Duke Mu of Ch'in organized thirty thousand men into penetrating formations and subdued neighboring enemies.

"Thus the ruler of a strong state must evaluate his people. Among the people those who have courage and strength should be assembled into one unit. Those who take pleasure in advancing into battle and exerting their strength to manifest their loyalty and courage should be assembled into another unit. Those who can climb high and traverse far, who are nimble and fleet should be assembled into a unit. Officials of the king who have lost their positions and want to show their merit to their ruler should be assembled into a unit. Those who abandoned their cities or left their defensive positions and want to eradicate the disgrace should also be assembled into a unit. These five will constitute the army's disciplined, elite troops. With three thousand such men, from within one can strike out and break any encirclement or from without break into any city and slaughter the defenders."⁹

Marquis Wu inquired: "I would like to hear about the Way [Tao] for making battle formations invariably stable, defenses inevitably solid, and victory in battle certain." Wu Ch'i replied: "This can immediately be made clear, but why ask only about this? If you are able to have worthy men hold high positions and the unworthy occupy low positions, then your battle formations will already be stable. If the people are settled in their farming and homes and [are] attached to their local authorities, then your defenses will already be solid. When the hundred surnames all acclaim my lord and condemn neighboring states, then in battle you will already be victorious."

Once when Marquis Wu was planning government affairs, none of his numerous ministers could equal him. After dismissing the court he had a happy, self-satisfied look. Wu Ch'i entered and said: "Once in antiquity when King Chuang of Ch'u was planning state affairs, he discovered none of his ministers could equal his talents. After he had dismissed the court he wore a trou-

bled countenance. Duke Shen inquired: 'Why does your lordship have a troubled countenance?' He replied: 'I have heard it said that there is no lack of Sages in the world and no shortage of Worthies in a state. One who can get them to be his teachers will be a king, while one who has them as his friends can become a hegemon. Now I am not talented, yet none of my ministers can even equal me in ability. Our state of Ch'u is in deep trouble.' This is what the king of Ch'u found troublesome, yet you are pleased by it. I therefore dare to be fearful!" Marquis Wu immediately looked embarrassed.¹⁰

2. Evaluating the Enemy

Marquis Wu addressed Wu Ch'i: "At present Ch'in coerces me on the west, Ch'u encircles me in the south, Chao collides with me in the north, Ch'i encroaches on us in the east, Yen cuts off my rear, and Han occupies land to the front. Defending against the troops of six nations in all four directions, our strategic configurations of power [*shih*] is extremely disadvantageous. I am worried. What can be done about this?"

Wu Ch'i replied: "In general first being cautious is the true treasure in the Way [Tao] for ensuring the security of the state. As you have now awakened to the trouble, disaster can be kept away. Let me discuss the character and customs of these six countries."¹¹

"Although Ch'i's battle array is dense in number, it is not solid. That of Ch'in is dispersed, with the soldiers preferring to fight individually. Ch'u's formations have good order, but they cannot long maintain their positions. Yen's formations are adept at defense, but they are not mobile."¹² The battle arrays of the Three Chin are well controlled, but they prove useless.

"Now Ch'i's character is hard; their country is prosperous; the ruler and ministers are arrogant and extravagant and insulting to the common people. The government is expansive, but salaries are inequitable. Each formation is of two minds, with the front being heavy and the rear light. Thus while they are dense, they are not stable. The Way [Tao] to attack them is to divide them into three, harrying and pursuing the left and right, coercing and following them for then their formations can be destroyed.

"Ch'in's character is strong, the land treacherous, and the government severe. Their rewards and punishments are believed in; the people never yield but instead are all fiery and contentious. Thus they scatter and individually engage in combat. The Way [Tao] to attack them is to first entice them with profits for their soldiers are greedy and will abandon their generals to pursue them. Capitalizing on their misjudgment you can hunt down their scattered

ranks, establish ambushes, take advantage of the moment, and then their generals can be captured.

"Ch'u's character is weak, its lands broad, its government troubling [to the people], and its people weary. Thus while they are well-ordered, they do not long maintain their positions. The Way [Tao] to attack them is to suddenly strike and cause chaos in the encampments. First snatch away their *ch'i*—lightly¹³ advancing and then quickly retreating, tiring and laboring them, never actually joining battle with them. Then their army can be defeated.

"Yen's character is sincere and straightforward. Its people are careful; they love courage and righteousness and rarely practice deception in their plans. Thus they will defend their positions but are not mobile. The Way [Tao] to attack them is to strike and press them; insult them and then put distance between you; then race and get behind them so that their upper ranks will be doubtful and their lower ranks fearful. Be cautious about our chariots and cavalry, avoiding conflict on the open road, and then their general can be captured.

"The Three Chin are central countries. Their character is harmonious and their governments equitable. The populace is weary from battle but experienced in arms, and they have little regard for their generals. Salaries are meager, and as their officers have no commitment to fight to the death, they are ordered but useless. The Way [Tao] to attack them is to press [points in] their formations, and when large numbers appear oppose them. When they turn back, pursue them in order to wear them out. That then is the strategic configuration of power [*shih*] in these countries.

"Within the army you must have soldiers with the courage of tigers, the strength to easily lift tripods, and the fleetness of barbarian horses. To attack their flags and seize their generals you must have men with such abilities. If you have men such as these, select and segregate them [into special units]; favor and honor them. They are referred to as the 'army's fate.' Those who are expert in the use of the five weapons,¹⁴ who are strong and quick and are intent on swallowing the enemy should be given rank and prominence for they can make victory decisive. If you are generous to their parents, wives, and children; encourage them with rewards; and awe them with punishments, these strong soldiers, when in formation, will solidly hold their positions for a long time. If you can discern and evaluate men such as these, you can attack a force double your strength."

Marquis Wu exclaimed: "Good!"

Wu-tzu said: "In general when evaluating the enemy there are eight conditions under which one engages in battle without performing divination."¹⁵

"First, in violent winds and extreme cold, they arise early and are on the march while [barely] awake, breaking ice to cross streams, unfearing of any hardship."¹⁶

"Second, in the burning heat of midsummer, they arise late and without delay press forward in haste, through hunger and thirst, concentrating on attaining far-off objectives.

"Third, the army has been out in the field for an extended period; their food supplies are exhausted; the hundred surnames are resentful and angry; and numerous baleful portents have arisen, with the superior officers being unable to squash their effects.

"Fourth, the army's resources have already been exhausted; firewood and hay are scarce; the weather frequently cloudy and rainy; and even if they wanted to plunder for supplies, there is nowhere to go.

"Fifth, the number mobilized is not large; the terrain and water not advantageous; the men and horses both sick and worn out; and no assistance comes from their allies.

"Sixth, the road is far and the sun setting; the officers and men have labored long and are fearful. They are tired and have not eaten; having cast aside their armor, they are resting.

"Seventh, the generals are weak; the officials irresponsible; the officers and troops are not solid; the Three Armies are frequently frightened; and the forces lack any assistance.

"Eighth, their formations are not yet settled; their encampment [is] not yet finished; or they are traversing dangerous territory and narrow defiles, half concealed and half exposed.

"In these eight conditions attack them without any doubts.

"There are six circumstances in which, without performing divination, you should avoid conflict.

"First, the land is broad and vast, the people wealthy and numerous.

"Second, the government loves the people, the ruler's beneficence extends and flows [to all of them].

"Third, rewards are trusted, punishments based on investigation, and both are invariably implemented in a timely fashion.

"Fourth, people are ranked according to their military accomplishments; they award official positions to the Worthy and employ the able.

"Fifth, their forces are massive, and their weapons and armor are all first-rate.

"Sixth, they have the assistance of all their neighbors and the support of a powerful state.

"In general in these situations you are not a match for the enemy, so without doubt avoid them. This is what is meant by 'seeing possibility and advancing, knowing difficulty and withdrawing.'"

Marquis Wu inquired: "From external observation of the enemy I would like to know their internal character, from studying their advance know at what point they will stop in order to determine victory and defeat."¹⁷ May I hear about this?"

Wu Ch'i replied: "If the enemy approaches in reckless disarray, unthinking; if their flags and banners are confused and in disorder; and if the men and horses frequently look about, then one unit can attack ten of theirs, invariably causing them to be helpless.

"If the feudal lords have not yet assembled; ruler and ministers are not yet in agreement; ditches and embankments not yet complete; prohibitions and orders not yet issued; and the Three Armies clamoring—wanting to advance but being unable to, wanting to retreat but not daring to—then you can attack with half the enemy's force and never lose in a hundred encounters."

Marquis Wu asked: "Is there a Way [Tao] by which the enemy can invariably be attacked?"

Wu Ch'i said: "In employing the army you must ascertain the enemy's voids and strengths and then race [to take advantage of] his endangered points. When the enemy has just arrived from afar and their battle formations are not yet properly deployed, they can be attacked. If they have eaten but not yet established their encampment, they can be attacked. If they are running about wildly, they can be attacked. If they have labored hard, they can be attacked. If they have not yet taken advantage of the terrain, they can be attacked. When they have lost the critical moment and not followed up on opportunities, they can be attacked. When they have traversed a great distance and the rear guard has not yet had time to rest, they can be attacked. When fording rivers and only half of them have crossed, they can be attacked. On narrow and confined roads, they can be attacked. When their flags and banners move about chaotically, they can be attacked. When their formations frequently move about, they can be attacked. When a general is separated from his soldiers, they can be attacked. When they are afraid, they

can be attacked. In general in circumstances such as these, select crack troops to rush on them, divide your remaining troops, and continue the assault—pressing the attack swiftly and decisively.”

3. Controlling the Army

Marquis Wu asked: “In employing the troops what is primary?”

Wu Ch’i replied: “First make clear the four [principles] of lightness, the two of heaviness, and the one of belief.”

The Duke asked: “What do you mean?”

He replied: “You should arrange the employment of terrain so that it will be easy for the horses; the horses so that they will easily pull the chariots; the chariots so that they will easily convey the men; and the men so that they will easily engage in battle. If you are clear about treacherous and easy ground, then the terrain will be light for the horses. If they have hay and grain at the proper times, the horses will easily pull the chariots. If the axles are well greased, the chariots will easily convey the men. If the weapons are sharp and armor sturdy, the men will easily engage in battle. For advancing there should be generous rewards; for retreating heavy penalties; and they should both be properly implemented so that they will be believed in. If your examination can realize this, it will be the key to victory.”¹⁸

Marquis Wu asked: “What measures will ensure the soldiers will be victorious?”

Wu Ch’i replied: “Control¹⁹ is foremost.”

Marquis Wu again asked: “It is not large numbers?”

“If the laws and orders are not clear, rewards and punishments not trusted; when sounding the gongs will not cause them to halt or beating the drum to advance, then even if you had one million men, of what use would they be? What is meant by control is that when stationary [in camp] they observe the forms of propriety [*li*] and when in action they are awesome. When they advance they cannot be withstood; when they withdraw they cannot be pursued. Their advancing and withdrawing are measured; the left and right flanks respond to the signal flags. Even if broken off from the main order they preserve their formations; even if scattered they will reform lines. They will hold together in peace; they will hold together in danger. Their number can be assembled together, but cannot be forced apart. They can be employed, but they cannot be exhausted. No matter where you can dispatch

them, no one under Heaven will be able to withstand them. They are called ‘the troops of a father and son.’”²⁰

Wu-tzu said: “In general the Way [Tao] to command an army on the march is to not contravene the proper measure of advancing and stopping; not miss the appropriate times for eating and drinking; and not completely exhaust the strength of the men and horses. These three are the means by which the troops can undertake the orders of their superiors. When the orders of superiors are followed, control is produced. If advancing and resting are not measured; if drinking and eating are not timely and appropriate; and if, when the horses are tired and the men weary, they are not allowed to relax in the encampment, then they will be unable to put the commander’s orders into effect. When the commander’s orders are thus disobeyed, when encamped they will be in turmoil, and in battle they will be defeated.”

Wu-tzu said: “In general, on the battlefield—soon to become a graveyard—if the soldiers are committed to fight to the death they will live, whereas if they seek to stay alive they will die. A good general will act as if [they are] in a sinking boat or trapped in a burning building—there is not enough time for the wise to make plans or the courageous to get angry. Only engaging the enemy will do! Thus it is said that the greatest harm that can befall the army’s employment [stems from] hesitation, while the disasters that strike the Three Armies are born in doubt.”

Wu-tzu said: “Now men constantly perish from their inabilities and are defeated by the unfamiliar. Thus among the methods for using the military, training and causing them to be alert are first. One man who has been trained in warfare can instruct ten men. Ten men who have studied warfare can train one hundred men. And one hundred such men can train one thousand. One thousand, ten thousand; and ten thousand who have been trained in warfare can train the entire body of the Three Armies.

“With the nearby await the distant; with the well-ordered await the labored; with the surfeited await the hungry.”²¹

“Have them deploy in circular formations, then change to square ones. Have them sit, then get up; move, then halt. Have them move to the left, then the right; forward and to the rear. Have them divide and combine, unite and

disperse. When all these changes are familiar, provide them with weapons. These are what are termed 'the general's affairs.'"

Wu-tzu said: "The basic rule of warfare that should be taught is that men short in stature should carry spears and spear-tipped halberds, while the tall should carry bows and crossbows.²² The strong should carry the flags and banners; the courageous should carry the bells and drums. The weak should serve in supply work, while the wise should supervise the planning.

"Districts and villages should be organized together, with squads of five and ten forming the basis for mutual protection and guarantee. To a single drum beat they should prepare their weapons; to the double beat they should drill in various deployments; to a triple beat they should hasten to eat; to a quadruple beat they should have final inspection; and to a five-beat cadence they should move out. Only after you hear the drums sound in unison should you raise the banners."

Marquis Wu asked: "Is there a Way [Tao] for advancing and halting the Three Armies?"

Wu Ch'i replied: "Do not confront 'Heaven's Furnace' or 'Dragon's Head.' Heaven's Furnace is the mouth of a deep valley. Dragon's Head is the base of a high mountain. You should keep the Green Dragon banner on the left, White Tiger on the right, Vermillion Bird in the front, Mysterious Military to the rear, with Twinkler above from where military affairs will be controlled. When about to engage in combat determine the wind's direction. If favorable, yell and follow it; if contrary, assume a solid formation and await the enemy."

Marquis Wu asked: "In general are there methods for taking care of the chariots and cavalry?"²³

Wu Ch'i replied: "Now the horses must be properly settled, with appropriate grass and water and correct feeding so as to be neither hungry nor full. In the winter they should have warm stables, in the summer cool sheds. Their mane and hair should be kept trimmed and their hooves properly cared for. Blinders and ear protectors should be used so as to keep them from being startled and frightened. Practice their galloping and pursuit, exercise constraint over their advancing and halting. Men and horses must be attached to each other; only thereafter can they be employed.

"The equipment for the chariots and cavalry—such as saddles, bridles, bits, and reins—must all be complete and durable. Normally, the horses do not receive their injuries near the end of the battle but invariably they are injured at the start. Similarly, they are not injured so much by hunger as by being overfed. When the sun is setting and the road long, the riders should frequently dismount for it is better to have the men weary than to overlabor the horses. You should always direct movements so as to keep some strength in reserve against the enemy suddenly turning on us. Anyone who is clear about this can traverse the realm without hindrance."

4. The Tao of the General

Wu-tzu said: "Now the commanding general of the Three Armies should combine both military and civilian abilities. The employment of soldiers requires uniting both hardness and softness. In general when people discuss generalship, they usually focus on courage. However, courage is but one of a general's many characteristics for the courageous will rashly join battle with the enemy. To rashly join battle with an enemy without knowing the advantages and disadvantages is not acceptable. Now the affairs to which the general must pay careful attention are five: first, regulation; second, preparation; third, commitment; fourth, caution; and fifth, simplification. Regulation is governing the masses just as one controls a few. Preparation is going out the city gate as if seeing the enemy. Commitment means entering combat without any concern for life. Caution means that even after conquering, one maintains the same control and attitude as if just entering a battle. Simplification means the laws and orders are kept to a minimum and are not abrasive.

"To accept the mandate [of command] without ever declining, destroy the enemy, and only afterward speak about returning is the proper form of behavior [*li*] for a general. Thus when the army goes forth, his only thought should be of the glory that death will bring, not the shame of living."

Wu-tzu said: "In general warfare has four vital points: *ch'i*, terrain, affairs, and strength. When the masses of the Three Armies—the million soldiers of the forces—are strategically deployed in appropriate formations according to varying degrees of strength by one man, this is termed the 'vital point [*chi*] of *ch'i*.' When the road is narrow and the way perilous; when famous mountains present great obstacles; and if ten men defend a place one thousand cannot pass, this is termed a 'vital point [*chi*] of earth.' Being good at con-

trolling clandestine operatives; with a few light troops harassing the enemy, causing them to scatter; and forcing rulers and ministers to feel mutual annoyance and higher and lower ranks to reproach each other, this is termed the 'vital point [*chi*] of affairs.' When the chariots have solid axles and secure pins; the boats [have] well-suited rudders and oars; the officers are thoroughly familiar with the fighting formations; and the horses practiced in pursuit and maneuvers, this is termed the 'vital point [*chi*] of strength.' One who knows these four is qualified to be a general. However, his awesomeness, Virtue [*te*], benevolence, and courage must be sufficient to lead his subordinates and settle the masses. Furthermore, he must frighten the enemy and resolve doubts. When he issues orders, no one will dare disobey them. Wherever he may be, rebels will not dare oppose him. Gaining him, the state will grow strong; losing him, the state will perish. This is what is referred to as a good general."

Wu-tzu said: "Now the different drums, gongs, and bells are the means to awe the ear; flags and banners, pennants and standards the means to awe the eye; and prohibitions, orders, punishments, and fines the means to awe the mind. When the ear has been awestruck by sound, it cannot but be clear. When the eye has been awestruck by color, it cannot but be discriminating. When the mind has been awestruck by penalties, it cannot but be strict. If these three are not established, even though you have the support of the state you will invariably be defeated by the enemy. Thus it is said that wherever the general's banners are, everyone will go, and wherever the general points, everyone will move forward—even unto death."²⁴

Wu-tzu said: "In general the essentials of battle are as follows. You must first attempt to divine²⁵ the enemy's general and evaluate his talent. In accord with the situation exploit the strategic imbalance of power [*ch'üan*]; then you will not labor but will still achieve results. A commanding general who is stupid and trusting can be deceived and entrapped. One who is greedy and unconcerned about reputation can be given gifts and bribed. One who easily changes his mind and lacks real plans can be labored and distressed. If the upper ranks are wealthy and arrogant while the lower ranks are poor and resentful, they can be separated and divided. If their advancing and withdrawing are often marked by doubt and the troops have no one to rely on, they can be shocked into running off. If the officers despise the commanding general and are intent on returning home, by blocking off the easy

roads and leaving the treacherous ones open, they can be attacked and captured. If the terrain over which they advance is easy but the road for withdrawal difficult, they can be forced to come forward. If the way to advance is difficult but the road for retreating easy, they can be pressed and attacked. If they encamp on low wetlands where there is no way for the water to drain off, if heavy rain should fall several times, they can be flooded and drowned. If they make camp in a wild marsh or fields dense with a heavy tangle of grass and stalks, should violent winds frequently arise you can burn the fields and destroy them. If they remain encamped for a long time—the generals and officers growing lax and lazy, the army becoming unprepared—you can sneak up and spring a surprise attack."

Marquis Wu asked: "When our two armies are confronting each other but I do not know their general, if I want to fathom him what methods are there?"

Wu Ch'i replied: "Order some courageous men from the lower ranks to lead some light shock troops to test him. [When the enemy responds] they should concentrate on running off instead of trying to gain some objective. Then analyze the enemy's advance, whether their actions—such as sitting and standing—are in unison and their organization well preserved; whether when they pursue your retreat they feign being unable to catch you, or when they perceive easy gain they pretend not to realize it. A commander like this may be termed a 'wise general.' Do not engage him in battle.

"If their troops approach yelling and screaming, their flags and pennants in confusion, while some of their units move of their own accord and others stop, some weapons held vertically, others horizontally—if they pursue our retreating troops as if they are afraid they will not reach us, or seeing advantage are afraid of not gaining it, this marks a stupid general. Even if his troops are numerous they can be taken."

5. Responding to Change

Marquis Wu asked: "If the chariots are sturdy, the horses excellent, the generals courageous, and the soldiers strong, but when you suddenly encounter the enemy they are thrown into turmoil and break formation, what can be done?"

Wu Ch'i replied: "In general it is a rule of battle that during daylight hours the flags, banners, pennants, and standards provide the measure, while at night the gongs, drums, pipes, and whistles provide the constraints."²⁶ When

left is signaled, they should go left; when right, then right. When the drum is beaten, they should advance; when the gongs sound, they should halt. At the first blowing they should form ranks; at the second assemble together. Execute anyone who does not follow the orders. When the Three Armies submit to your awesomeness and the officers and soldiers obey commands, then in combat no enemy will be stronger than you, nor will any defenses remain impenetrable to your attack."

Marquis Wu asked: "If the enemy is numerous while we are few, what can I do?"

Wu Ch'i replied: "Avoid them on easy terrain, attack them in narrow quarters. Thus it is said, for one to attack ten, nothing is better than a narrow defile. For ten to attack one hundred, nothing is better than a deep ravine. For one thousand to attack ten thousand, nothing is better than a dangerous pass.²⁷ Now if you have a small number of troops, should they suddenly arise—striking the gongs and beating the drums—to attack the enemy on a confined road, then even though his numbers are very great, they will all be startled and move about. Thus it is said, when employing larger numbers concentrate on easy terrain; when using small numbers concentrate on naturally confined terrain."

Marquis Wu asked: "Their forces are extremely numerous, martial, and courageous. Behind them are ravines and dangerous passes; on their right mountains; on the left a river. They have deep moats and high ramparts and are defending their position with strong crossbowmen. Their withdrawal is like a mountain moving, their advance like a tempest. As their food stocks are also plentiful, it will be difficult to defend against them for very long. What should be done?"

Wu Ch'i replied: "A great question indeed! This is not [a problem] of the strength of chariots and cavalry²⁸ but [of having] the plans of a Sage. If you can prepare one thousand chariots and ten thousand cavalry and support them with foot soldiers, you can divide them into five armies, each one traversing a different route. Now if the five armies simultaneously move along five different routes, the enemy will certainly be confused and will not know where to concentrate his efforts. If the enemy fortified his defenses in order to solidify his troops, quickly dispatch spies in order to observe their plans. If they listen to our persuasions, they will abandon their positions and depart. If they do not listen to our persuasions, they will kill our emissaries and

burn the treaties. Then divide your forces and engage them in five battles. However, if you win any of the battles do not pursue the retreating enemy. If you do not win then withdraw in extreme haste, thereby feigning a retreat. After reforming, swiftly attack them, with one force tying them up in the front, another cutting off their rear, while two of your armies move silently to the left and right flanks to suddenly attack them. If the five armies strike simultaneously, they will certainly gain the advantage. This is the Way [Tao] for attacking the strong."

Marquis Wu asked: "The enemy is nearby, pressing us. Even if I want to retreat, there is no road. My soldiers are terrified. What can I do?"

Wu Ch'i replied: "The technique for dealing with this is as follows. If your troops are numerous and his few, divide them and attack. If, on the contrary, his troops are numerous and yours few, then use improvised measures to harry him, never giving him any rest. Then, even though he is numerous, he can be forced to submit."

Marquis Wu asked: "If I encounter the enemy in a deep valley where gorges and defiles abound to the sides, while his troops are numerous and ours few, what should I do?"

Wu Ch'i replied: "Traverse hilly regions, forests, valleys, deep mountains, and vast wetlands quickly, departing from them posthaste. Do not be dilatory. If in high mountains or a deep valley the armies should suddenly encounter each other, you should first beat the drums and set up a clamor—taking advantage of it to advance your archers and crossbowmen, both shooting the enemy and taking prisoners. Carefully investigate their degree of control; if they are confused, then attack without doubt."

Marquis Wu asked: "On the left and right are high mountains, while the land is extremely narrow and confined. If when we meet the enemy we dare not attack them yet cannot escape, what shall we do?"

Wu Ch'i replied: "This is referred to as 'valley warfare.' Even if your troops are numerous, they are useless. Summon your talented officers to confront the enemy, the nimble-footed and the sharpest weapons to be at the forefront. Divide your chariots and array your cavalry, concealing them on all four sides several *li* apart so that they will not show their weapons. The enemy will certainly assume a solid defensive formation, not daring either to

advance or retreat. Thereupon display your flags and array your banners, withdraw outside the mountains, and encamp. The enemy will invariably be frightened, and your chariots and cavalry should then harass them, not permitting them any rest. This is the Way [Tao] for valley warfare."

Marquis Wu asked: "If we encounter the enemy in a vast, watery marsh where the chariot wheels sink down to the point that the shafts are under water; our chariots and cavalry are floundering; and we have not prepared any boats or oars so we cannot advance or retreat, what should we do?"

Wu Ch'i replied: "This is referred to as 'water warfare.' Do not employ chariots or cavalry, but have them remain on the side. Mount some nearby height and look all about. You must ascertain the water's condition, know its expanse, and fathom its depth. Then you can conceive an unorthodox stratagem [*ch'i*] for victory. If the enemy begins crossing the water, press them when half have crossed."

Marquis Wu asked: "When it has been continuously raining for a long time so the horses sink into the mire and the chariots are stuck, while we are under enemy attack on all four sides and the Three Armies are terrified, what should I do?"

Wu Ch'i replied: "In general desist from employing chariots when the weather is rainy and the land wet, but mobilize them when it is hot and dry. Value high terrain, disdain low ground. When racing your strong chariots, whether advancing or halting, you must adhere to the road. If the enemy arises, be sure to follow their tracks."

Marquis Wu asked: "If a savage raiding force suddenly appears—plundering our lands and fields, seizing our cattle and horses—what should I do?"

Wu Ch'i replied: "When a savage raiding force appears, you must carefully consider its strength and well maintain your defensive position. Do not respond to their attacks [by going out to engage them]. When they are about to withdraw at the end of the day, their packs will certainly be heavy and their hearts will invariably be afraid. In withdrawing they will concentrate on speed, and inevitably there will be stragglers. You should then pursue and attack them, and their troops can be overcome."

Wu-tzu said: "Now as to the Way [Tao] for attacking the enemy and besieging his cities: After his cities and towns have already been shattered, enter each of the palaces, take control of their bureaucrats, and collect their implements [of administration]. However, wherever your army goes do not cut down the trees, destroy houses, take the grain, slaughter the animals, or burn their supplies. Thus you will show the populace that you do not harbor vicious intentions. Accept those who seek to surrender and settle them."

6. Stimulating the Officers

Marquis Wu asked: "Is making punishments severe and rewards clear adequate for victory?"

Wu Ch'i replied: "As to these matters of severity and clarity I do not have all the answers. Even so, they are not what can be relied on. Now if when you issue commands and promulgate orders the people take pleasure in hearing them; when you raise the army and mobilize the masses the people take pleasure in battle; and when the weapons clash and blades cross the people take pleasure in death, then these three are what a ruler of men can rely on."

Marquis Wu asked: "How does one attain this result?"

Wu Ch'i answered: "You should identify men of accomplishment and honor them with a grand feast while also stimulating those who failed to accomplish anything notable."

Thereupon Marquis Wu had sitting mats set out in the ancestral temple hall, arrayed into three rows, and held a feast for the officers and chief officials. Those distinguished by their achievements sat in the front row and were feasted with the finest foods together with three meats served on the most valuable dishes. Those who ranked next in accomplishment sat in the middle row and were feasted with fine food served on less lavish vessels. Those who had not accomplished anything noteworthy sat in the last row and were feasted with fine food served on ordinary utensils. When the feast was over and they came out, he also honored the parents and families of the meritorious outside the temple gate, again according to their accomplishments. He annually sent emissaries to call on the families of those who had died in the service of the country, bestowing aid on their parents. By so doing he showed that they would not be forgotten.

After he had performed these actions for three years, Ch'in happened to mobilize its army and approach the West River commandery. When Wei's officers heard about it, those that buckled on their armor and enthusiastically

attacked them without waiting for any orders from their superiors numbered in the tens of thousands.

Marquis Wu summoned Wu Ch'i and said: "Your previous instructions have all been effected."

Wu Ch'i replied: "I have heard that men have strengths and weaknesses, that their *ch'i* flourishes and ebbs. If your lordship is willing to test fifty thousand previously undistinguished men, I would like to lead them to engage the enemy. If Ch'in is not victorious, it will be laughed at by the feudal lords and lose the balance of authority [*ch'üan*] over the world.²⁹

"Now if there is a murderous villain hidden in the woods, even though one thousand men pursue him they all look around like owls and glance about like wolves. Why? They are afraid that violence will erupt and harm them personally.³⁰ Thus one man oblivious to life and death can frighten one thousand. Now if I can take a mass of fifty thousand and turn them into a single murderous villain, leading them to punish Ch'in, we will surely make it difficult for the enemy!"

Thereupon Marquis Wu assented to his plan, granting him another five hundred strong chariots and three thousand cavalry. They destroyed Ch'in's five-hundred-thousand-man army as a result of this policy to encourage the officers.

The day before the battle Wu Ch'i spoke to the Three Armies: "All the aides and officers must confront, follow, and capture the enemy's chariots, cavalry, and infantry. If the chariots do not make prisoners of the enemy's chariots, the cavalry does not make prisoners of the enemy's cavalry, and the infantry does not take the enemy's infantry, then even if we forge an overwhelming victory no one will be credited with any achievements." Thus on the day of the battle his orders were not onerous, but his awesomeness shook the world.

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Translator's Introduction

THE *Wei Liao-tzu* is purportedly named after a historical figure whose surname was Wei (although this is not the same Chinese character as the state of Wei) and personal name was Liao. The character "tzu," meaning master and indicating respect, was added by the compilers of his book. One notation suggests he had once been a student of Lord Shang, the famous Legalist theorist and fabled administrator who advocated the creation of a strong centralized government marked by strict control of the people and resources. In another tradition, Wei Liao is recorded as having been an important adviser to the first Ch'in emperor in his successful quest to wrest control over all of China, but scant historical evidence sustains either view.¹

Whatever his personal history, Wei Liao was a brilliant strategist and a perceptive observer who realized that only by integrating the civil and the martial could a state be assured of surviving in the tumultuous Warring States environment. He never illustrated his discussions with examples from personal military experience; he is not historically noted as a commander; and the book is almost devoid of actual tactics—therefore he appears to have been strictly a theoretician. However, his extensive military knowledge is evident from the frequent inclusion of passages that are found in the present *Six Secret Teachings*, the *Art of War*, and other military books² and from his detailed description of army organization and discipline.³

One view holds that Wei Liao probably lived in the last half of the fourth century B.C., an era in which mendicant persuaders indiscriminately sought receptive ears among the feudal lords regardless of their moral qualifications or state identification. Although most of them propounded doctrines that emphatically required loyalty and good faith, they themselves apparently remained unencumbered by such virtues until being accorded respectful treatment and proper employment. Even then, as exemplified by the famous general Wu Ch'i, if times changed and favor was lost, they suffered few qualms about shifting their allegiance to another regime.

Wei was among the states confronted by the new, terrible reality of the Warring States period (as discussed in the introduction). One of the three feudal domains formed by the disintegration of Chin, Wei not only retained the strength to be numbered among the seven major powers but initially also grew in military prowess. With a western border along the future Great Wall, it encompassed the central region north of the Chou imperial domain. However, Wei's fortunes began to fade under King Hui (reigned 370–319 B.C.)⁴ when it suffered two significant defeats and was forced to move its capital to Ta-liang. The major defeat was at Ma-ling at the hands of Ch'i in 341 B.C., but the next twenty years also witnessed a series of losses to Ch'in—the emerging power that eventually unified the empire in 221 B.C.—and another to the large southern state of Ch'u. After shifting the capital the king renamed the state Liang and referred to himself as the “king of Liang.”

The opening chapter of the *Wei Liao-tzu* makes it appear as though the book records Wei Liao's response to King Hui's obsessive search for the military and political knowledge that would not only strengthen Wei's sagging defenses but would also furnish the means by which to defeat his enemies and avenge his losses. When Mencius—the famous Confucian standard-bearer—visited King Hui in about the same period, the king initiated their interview by saying:⁵ “As for ourselves, in the east I was defeated by Ch'i, and my eldest son died there. In the west we suffered the loss of some several hundred *li* to Ch'in. In the south we have been insulted by Ch'u. I am ashamed of this.”

King Hui brusquely initiated his interview with Wei Liao with the same theme: “Is it true that the Yellow Emperor, through punishments and Virtue, achieved a hundred victories [without a defeat]?” Wei Liao immediately redirected the focus with a reply that emphasized human effort:⁶ “Punishment was employed to attack [the rebellious], Virtue was employed to preserve [the people]. This is not what is referred to as ‘Heavenly Offices, [auspicious] hours and days, yin and yang, facing toward and turning your back to.’ The Yellow Emperor's [victories] were a matter of human effort, that is all.” Wei Liao departed when he failed to secure employment in Wei, apparently because the king lacked confidence in policies that in addition to military measures would require the cultivation and pursuit of virtue.

The only other textual reference to a “Wei Liao” appears in the *Shih chi* annals depicting Ch'in's ascension to power roughly eighty years later. A man identified only as “Wei Liao, a man of Ta-liang” (the capital of Wei) offers advice to the youthful king of Ch'in, the eventual unifier of the empire known as Ch'in Shih Huang-ti. In 237 B.C. the king seized the reins of power

from his ministers and immediately began to expel all foreign advisers and favored retainers:

The king had a sweeping search conducted in order to expel the foreign retainers. Li Ssu sent up a memorial [in opposition] and the king stayed the expulsion order. Li Ssu then persuaded the king of Ch'in to consider first taking Han in order to frighten the other states. Thereupon he had Li Ssu plan the fall of Han. The king of Han was worried and plotted with Han Fei-tzu how to weaken Ch'in.

[At this time] Wei Liao, a native of Ta-liang, advised the king of Ch'in, saying: “With respect to [the vastness of] Ch'in's borders, the feudal lords may be compared to the rulers of provinces and districts. My only fear is that the feudal lords will form an alliance, uniting to do something unexpected. This is how Chih Po, Fu Ch'ai, and King Min perished. I request your Majesty not begrudge the expense of his wealth to bribe the great ministers and thereby cause confusion in their plans. Without expending more than thirty thousand *chin* the feudal lords can be eliminated.” The king of Ch'in followed his plan, never stood on ceremony in his interviews with Wei Liao, and wore the same clothes and ate the same food.

Liao said [to others]: “As for the king of Ch'in's character, he has a nose like a wasp, elongated eyes, shoulders like a vulture, and sounds like a wolf. He has little kindness and generosity for others but has the heart of a tiger or a wolf. When in straightened circumstances he easily humbles himself to others, but when he attains his ambition he will just as easily consume people. I am a common man, but when he sees me he is always very deferential. If I truly enable the king of Ch'in to gain his objective of ruling All under Heaven, then All under Heaven will become prisoners. I cannot consort with him for long.” Then he departed. The king of Ch'in realized it, stopped him, and appointed him as a Commander, using his plans and strategies. Li Ssu was in charge of governmental affairs.⁷

No further mention of Wei Liao's activities or his role in Ch'in survives, although the policy he suggested was apparently implemented with considerable success.

The historical picture is complicated further by the former existence of two distinct works entitled *Wei Liao-tzu*, based on their inclusion in two different *Han shu* bibliographic categories. One, which is identified with the Wei Liao who is noted as a disciple of Lord Shang, appears in the “miscellaneous” category, whereas the other is found under “military” books. The text incorporated in the present *Seven Military Classics*, although essentially consistent, also appears to combine two distinct works. (The first twelve chapters are more philosophical and general in scope and frequently deal

with grand strategy, whereas the last twelve focus on the nature and problems of organization, discipline, command, and structure.) This dichotomy has prompted various theories about the possible authors and their relationship with these texts, which are discussed in the last part of this introduction.

Scholarly interest in the *Wei Liao-tzu* has recently increased because several chapters, still fairly well preserved on bamboo slips, were discovered in 1972 in the Han dynasty tomb at Lin-i. Although there are numerous minor differences in wording—especially in the choice of particles—and the bamboo slip edition is characterized by a somewhat more philosophical orientation than the current *Wei Liao-tzu*, only a few of the differences significantly affect the traditional understanding of the historically received passages.

The style and historical content of the book suggest a composition date around the end of the fourth century B.C., and based on the bamboo slip edition,⁸ the book clearly assumed its present form before the inauguration of the Han in 206 B.C.—contrary to skeptical claims that denigrate it as a much later fabrication. Therefore, it might tentatively be concluded that the *Wei Liao-tzu* may actually be based on Wei Liao's court conversations with King Hui in the fourth century B.C., perhaps with additional, detailed material about military organization appended by someone from his family or school within the century after his death.

Basic Measures and Policies

Wei Liao must have been painfully aware of the military developments and famous engagements of the fourth century B.C. as well as of the escalating magnitude and brutality of battle. When he began his audiences with King Hui, he should have been thoroughly familiar with Wei's defeats at Kui-ling and Ma-ling, and he had probably studied and reflected on the strategies employed within the context of evolving military theory. Analyzing the state's situation, he apparently concluded that only radical, thoroughly implemented policies could provide any hope for preserving the state and perhaps achieving the king's virtually unobtainable objectives. Thus his conversations—as portrayed in the *Wei Liao-tzu*—propose drastic measures requiring strict enforcement and advocate a thorough revision of the state's values, policies, and basic approach to political and military issues.

The Basis: Agriculture and the People

Because the state of Wei had suffered devastating territorial, military, and economic losses in the preceding wars, increasing the population became an immediate priority. From Wei Liao's viewpoint, a state's prosperity de-

pended mainly on fully developing and exploiting its agricultural resources. In order to increase productivity, new lands must be cultivated and energetic farmers nurtured. Government policies that emphasize agriculture and offer incentives to attract disaffected, displaced, or vanquished migrant peoples simultaneously accomplish both objectives.⁹ Greater harvests rapidly provide the populace with adequate nourishment while creating economic wealth. When they are well fed, clothed, and sheltered, the people will be healthy, strong, and content and will naturally give their allegiance to the benevolent ruler who nurtured them. They will thus become loyal citizens capable of being inculcated with values, instructed in the virtues and demands of the state.

Humanistic Values and Authoritarian Government

The government must embrace the full range of humanistic values associated with Confucianism, although the *Wei Liao-tzu* never refers to Confucius nor attributes them to his school. The ruler must be the foremost exemplar of the Tao, personally cultivating and embodying Virtue. He should severely limit his desires and follow the path of moderation and restraint.¹⁰ His actions must always be righteous, his motives benevolent. His policies must be directed toward aiding and sustaining the people rather than toward self-aggrandizement and the glorious exercise of power. The forms of propriety, good faith, filial behavior, the family, friendship, and shame must all be fostered among the populace. When the agricultural seasons are respected and the government imposes few taxes and minimizes corvée duties, the people can be virtuous. As their faith in the government develops, they can be instructed in and rewarded for appropriate performance. When the laws, standards of propriety, and righteousness are taught, a sense of shame will develop and the government can then properly punish deviant behavior.¹¹ As long as the government does not exhaust the people, moral behavior and social conformance can be expected.

Although Wei Liao believed in the fundamental Confucian, humanistic virtues, he also advocated draconian measures to ensure that only those values sanctioned by the state as productive and acceptable would be honored. Therefore, he proposed strictly prohibiting heterodoxy and vigorously suppressing any tendencies inimical to agriculture and warfare, the twin foundations of the state. The government must establish the proper tone by not permitting desires nor extravagance, by eliminating decoration and frivolity. Talented administrators must be employed to supervise all the activities of both the state and the people, with the people's welfare being paramount. Commercial enterprises and the pursuit of profit, although essential to the state's economic strength and welfare,¹² must be appropriately di-

rected and constrained to prevent them from harming the people and the entire value system. Harmony, cooperation, and unity must be fostered and ensured in all activities.

Conquest and the Path to Victory

If the government can truly establish Virtue and foster the people's welfare, the state should be able to develop the internal strength to vanquish its enemies without resorting to force of arms. Although there are many prerequisites to military success, proper preparation and thorough planning coupled with careful evaluation of the enemy and the battlefield situation are paramount. Accordingly:

In general, [in employing] the military there are those who gain victory through the Tao; those that gain victory through awesomeness; and those that gain victory through strength. Holding careful military discussions and evaluating the enemy, causing the enemy's *ch'i* to be lost and his forces to scatter so that even if his disposition is complete he will not be able to employ it, this is victory through the Tao.

Being precise about laws and regulations, making rewards and punishments clear, improving weapons and equipment, causing the people to have minds totally committed to fighting, this is victory through awesomeness.

Destroying armies and slaying generals, mounting barbicans and firing cross-bows, overwhelming the populace and seizing territory, returning only after being successful, this is victory through strength.

(Chapter 4: Combat Awesomeness)

Wei Liao extended the mandatory observance of humanitarian measures to campaign armies, reflecting the time-honored Confucian idea that punitive military actions should be directed against evil monarchs and their cohorts and not against the populace, except as armed adults might actively attack them. Implemented as military policy, this idea includes preserving the fields and orchards; not plundering the towns nor disturbing the populace; never destroying the people's means of livelihood; and generally securing the welfare of the people.¹³ In proposing such benevolent constraints, Wei Liao was probably reacting to the almost unimaginable scale of the carnage witnessed in his era—when several hundred thousand died in battles—and the brutal policies of states such as Ch'in, which awarded rank based on the number of heads taken in combat. Therefore, rather than foraging and plundering, as Sun-tzu advocated, Wei Liao felt the army should follow practices that minimize enemy opposition and encourage the enemy to surrender to the humane ruler who will return them to their lands. Although the *Wei Liao-tzu* is not alone among the *Seven Military Classics* in advocating such

measures, its author differed consciously from the practices of his time, no doubt because of the policy's strategic advantages rather than from any naive commitment to virtue.

Organization and Unity

Wei Liao believed in a strict hierarchical organization solidified by a mutual guarantee system that bonds men into units of five and ten and imposed linkages at all levels.¹⁴ The ruler exercises supreme authority, although the commanding general replaces him in the field. The civilian populace as well as the members of the army should respond as "the limbs respond to the mind." Strict enforcement of the mutual guarantee system, originated by Lord Shang, implicates all of the unit or squad members in the transgressions of any one of them. Whether in society or in battle, failure to discover and report another's crime, prevent a comrade's death, or fight with determination was punished with the same severity as if the negligent person had committed the offense himself. Contrary to Confucian belief, under this system a father could not conceal his son's crimes nor a son his father's. Systematic drilling and army training ensures that the soldiers are solidly bonded into squads, respond to commands, are fully cognizant of their responsibilities to each other and their commanders, and are capable of executing maneuvers and engaging the enemy without panicking in the chaos and stress of battle.¹⁵

Rewards and Punishments

Every military analyst emphasized the irreplaceable function of rewards and punishments in society and the army. Much of the *Wei Liao-tzu* is devoted to explicating the essential principles for implementing an effective system of rewards and punishments, the majority of which are common to the other military and Legalist writings of the time. The most basic principles include establishing severity in punishments and (contrary to the belief of Lord Shang) generosity in rewards, strictly imposing punishments on even the highest ranks and granting rewards to the lowest ranks, and never pardoning offenses—although certain losses and reversals in battle could be redeemed by valiant actions that result in commensurate or surpassing achievements. The standards of conduct as well as the laws and regulations must all be clear and well publicized. No deviation—such as spontaneous acts of individual courage—is to be tolerated. Rewards should be granted solely in accord with battlefield achievements, and rank should similarly be restricted to those who have proven themselves in the test of combat. Delays

in punishing and rewarding should never be allowed because their impact is diminished accordingly.

Spirit and Courage

Wei Liao believed that the army's *ch'i* essentially determined a battle's outcome; thus he extensively analyzed the nature and effects of spirit and courage, virtually formulating a detailed psychology of combat. The fundamental problem is simply that people fear danger and do not want to die, even for their native state. Comprehensive measures are necessary to forge an effective army:

People do not take pleasure in dying, nor do they hate life, [but] if the commands and orders are clear and the laws and regulations carefully detailed, you can make them advance. When, before [combat], rewards are made clear and afterward punishments are made decisive, then when [the troops] issue forth they will be able to realize an advantage, and when they move they will be successful.

(Chapter 3: Discussion of Regulations)

Wei Liao believed that by nurturing the people's allegiance to their ruler and the soldiers' love for their commander and combining the resultant positive motivation with their fear of harsh, certain punishment, a powerful, well-disciplined army could be fashioned. The key lies in ensuring that when battlefield fears of death and of the enemy inevitably arise, they are insignificant compared with the soldier's terror at the thought of the punishment they will certainly suffer for cowardice or defeat:

Now the people do not have two things they fear equally. If they fear us then they will despise the enemy; if they fear the enemy they will despise us. The one who is despised will be defeated; the one who establishes his awesomeness will be victorious. In general, when the general is able to implement the Way [to awesomeness], his commanders will fear him. When the commanders fear their general, the people will fear their commanders. When the people fear their commanders, then the enemy will fear the people. For this reason those who would know the Tao of victory and defeat must first know about the balance of power of "fearing" and "despising."¹⁶

(Chapter 5: Tactical Balance of Power in Attacks)

Creating certainty and fostering commitment are paramount because when the commander exudes confidence and the orders are clear, when doubts have no chance to arise, the men will be confident and assured in their actions. Enthusiastic, unquestioned commitment will dispel doubt,

carry men through battle, and terrorize the enemy—as does a warrior in the marketplace:

If a warrior wields a sword to strike people in the marketplace, among ten thousand people there will not be anyone who does not avoid him. If I say it is not that only one man is courageous but that the ten thousand are unlike him, what is the reason? Being committed to dying and being committed to seeking life are not comparable.

(Chapter 3: Discussion of Regulations)

Wei Liao-tzu accordingly believed in Sun-tzu's tactics to "rob the enemy of his spirit," to cause fear, consternation, and confusion. A general's weaknesses can be exploited to create doubt, and deception employed to surprise and terrorize the unprepared. When neither Virtue can cause the enemy's soldiers to be ashamed and willingly submit nor awesomeness compel them to flee without being overwhelmed in battle, then such measures must be employed and the victory delivered.

Strategic and Tactical Conceptions

If we accept the *Wei Liao-tzu* as a product of the mid- to late Warring States period, the development and refinement of certain topics previously expressed in the *Ssu-ma Fa*, *Art of War*, *Wu-tzu*, *Mo-tzu*, and Sun Pin's *Military Methods* become apparent. Of particular importance is the new, self-reliant attitude expressed from the inception of the conversations because Wei Liao rejected not only the yin-yang practices flourishing in his time but also all reliance on Heaven and the spirits. Human effort constitutes the sole means to achievement; therefore, the ruler must ensure that the state creates regulations and implements practices appropriate to the contemporary situation and fully exploits human potential. This is attained through the development of surpassing internal strength—both economic and military—in some views synonymous with the concept of *hsing* (shape, form) and its unfolding throughout the empire as necessary as *shih* (strategic advantage conveyed by deployment of force).¹⁷

Wei Liao's campaign army would be characterized by a complete discipline and thorough integration that would allow great flexibility in deploying and subsequently executing complex battle plans. His tactics emphasized selected principles advanced in the other military texts, particularly speed; deception; concentration of force; assaulting weak points while avoiding strengths; acting on the most complete intelligence; seizing and maintaining the initiative; and always being active rather than passive. Sun-tzu's vision of orthodox [*cheng*] and unorthodox [*ch'i*] forces, which is generally equated

with orthodox forces initiating a direct attack and unorthodox ones executing flanking or indirect attacks, evolved further into a concept of interrelationship, as one changes into the other.¹⁸ When discipline, speed, command expertise, and the orthodox/unorthodox are integrated and fully realized, dramatic results can be attained with small forces.¹⁹

Wei Liao and the History of the Text

The *Wei Liao-tzu* was undoubtedly composed between the late fourth and late third centuries B.C., or roughly the middle to late Warring States period. However, contemporary scholarship continues to debate whether the early texts had any connection with either of the historical Wei Liaos, when they attained final form, and whether the present book has been accurately transmitted from the originals. Because the various positions draw radically different conclusions from the textual materials, they merit brief summation here and in the accompanying notes.

Traditional studies have all observed that the *Han shu* bibliography lists a *Wei Liao-tzu* in twenty-nine sections in the miscellaneous category²⁰—with Pan Ku's annotation that it is by a Wei Liao of the Six States (Warring States) period—and another, identically titled book of thirty-one sections in the Ping *hsing-shih*²¹ military subclassification. Prior to the 1972 discovery of the bamboo slip edition at Lin-i, virtually all writings from the Sung dynasty onward labeled the *Seven Military Classics* edition a forgery or bemoaned the heavy losses that had reduced the original to only twenty-four sections. Those critics who condemned the *Six Secret Teachings* as an obvious forgery because of its purported brutality and the espousal of doctrines that could not possibly have been associated with true Sages equally found fault with the *Wei Liao-tzu*; they especially objected to the passage which asserts that a truly effective commander can "kill" half of his men.²² Among the latter group of critics, Yao Chi-heng also observed that the *Wei Liao-tzu* not coincidentally contains a passage from Mencius—which states that the "seasons of Heaven are not as good as the advantages of Earth"—and cited it as evidence that the author borrowed extensively from such writings to fabricate the book found in the miscellaneous category.²³

Traditionalists have also tended to recognize the existence of two distinct texts, speculating on which one provides the basis for the present work. Commenting on the miscellaneous entry, Yen Shih-ku identified Wei Liao as a student of Lord Shang,²⁴ which caused some analysts to focus almost exclusively on this aspect and ignore many concepts historically associated with the Confucians and Taoists.²⁵ Others have held that the military text

has been largely preserved and faithfully transmitted whereas the miscellaneous work has vanished, thus equally ignoring significant contents.²⁶ A third view, discussed below, proposed that there was only a single book but that it existed in different versions.

Inherently connected with the issue of textual transmission is the intricate question regarding the possible relationship of the present *Wei Liao-tzu* with the historically identified authors. One contemporary viewpoint suggests that in the absence of reliable proof to the contrary, particularly with the discovery of the bamboo slip edition, the contents should be attributed to the mendicant persuader Wei Liao because they are a record of the advice he proffered to King Hui. (The possibility of later accretions, revisions, and adjustments can easily be encompassed within this view.) This judgment is founded on the reference to Wei Liao at the beginning of the book; the continued submissive viewpoint of a subject speaking to a ruler throughout; the king's weakness and ignorance coupled with the state's debilitated condition; and the nature of the historical references.²⁷

A second perspective holds that the concepts expressed within the *Wei Liao-tzu* and the scope of warfare it reflects clearly indicate that it should date from the late Warring States period and its authorship be identified with the Wei Liao who ventured to advise the king of Ch'in.²⁸ Moreover, this Wei Liao's surname was perhaps Liao, and he held the essentially honorary position of "*wei*," or commandant.²⁹ This would account for the detailed knowledge of what appears to be Ch'in's military organization preserved in the last half of the present book³⁰ but unfortunately not for the pretense of advising King Hui because the political realities of the two states were radically different.

Chang Lieh, who has written several articles on the dates and background of the military writings, is a proponent of the late Warring States viewpoint for several interesting reasons.³¹ First, because King Hui and Lord Shang were known historical protagonists, if Wei Liao had been associated with the latter in any way or had espoused doctrines associated with him, he would hardly have dared to seek an audience with King Hui.³² Second, the amalgamation of Confucian concepts of righteousness and benevolence with a state policy sanctioning aggressive warfare (ostensibly to chastise the evil) did not evolve until late in the Warring States period, when it was synthesized by Hsün-tzu. Earlier, during King Hui's reign—in direct opposition to Confucians such as Mencius—Lord Shang had advocated eliminating virtue and its associated concepts from society and political life and relying instead on strength, rewards, and punishments. The *Wei Liao-tzu*, on the contrary, integrates virtue and might while stressing both severe punishments and gen-

erous rewards—the latter in direct contradiction of Lord Shang. Accordingly, the historical author should intellectually and temporally postdate Lord Shang and Hsün-tzu.³³ Third, he embraces and continues other ideas of Hsün-tzu, such as relying on men rather than Heaven and enriching the people.³⁴ Finally, noting Wei Liao's trepidations as chronicled by the *Shih chi*, Chang suggests they stemmed from his daunting championship of virtue and righteousness within an extremely inhospitable context of brutality and militarism. Chang therefore concludes that the text was written near the end of the Warring States period and that it is properly attributed to the late historical adviser to the young king.³⁵

In one of the initial articles analyzing the bamboo slips and the contemporary *Wei Liao-tzu*, Ho Fa-chou offers some general observations and conclusions.³⁶ First, he believes that the bamboo slip edition, the four chapters preserved in the *Ch'ün-shu chih-yao*,³⁷ and the text classified in the miscellaneous category were originally identical. However, he feels that the *Seven Military Classics* version originates in the one subsumed under the military category. Furthermore, an analysis of the extant writings causes him to conclude that both *Han shu* texts were originally variations of the same book, the miscellaneous version simply being characterized by more Confucian and Taoist terms and concepts. Correspondingly, the military materials in the military text were given greater prominence and the language was simplified, but the subject matter and conclusions remain congruent.³⁸

Ho also raises the intriguing question as to why, if the work is posited as a forgery, it would be imputed to an unknown sophist in an obscure presentation to a ruler remembered mostly for his failures. Because the *Wei Liao-tzu* contains numerous admonitions and correctives that could only have been directed to a weak ruler—rather than to the despot of a strong state such as Ch'in—Ho concludes it must be a record of an actual audience rather than a later confabulation. Further evidence is garnered from the historical events and figures Wei Liao cites—in particular his employment of Wu Ch'i as an exemplar—and the likelihood that Wei Liao was merely continuing to espouse practices and measures in concord with Wei's strong administrative and early Legalist tradition.³⁹ Furthermore, Wei's debilitated condition had prompted King Hui to actively seek external advice and receive proponents of virtually every position, thus stimulating an interchange of ideas and principles among Confucians, Taoists, Legalists, and others—such as Wei Liao.⁴⁰

Robin D. S. Yates, in a seminal article, has summarized many of these views and contributed his own interpretations.⁴¹ He finds internal evidence for having classified the *Wei Liao-tzu* under the military subcategory “form and positional advantage” (*hsing-shih*) lacking and questions whether the

extant texts are actually the ones seen by the *Han shu* bibliography's compilers.⁴² He further suggests that the book's identification with Wei Liao is essentially a matter of convenient attribution to foster a sense of authority and lacks any inherent justification.⁴³ Based on its Confucian and Taoist materials coupled with the diatribes against the use of divination, Yates then postulates a likely composition date that is slightly post-Mencius.⁴⁴

Finally, in the critical introduction to his 1989 annotated *Wei Liao-tzu ch'ien-shuo*,⁴⁵ Hsü Yung thoroughly reviews the above material—only to creatively revive the original theory that naively believed the historical figures, although active in two distinct periods, were actually a single individual. Unconvinced by the arguments for attributing the text to either the earlier or the later Wei Liao, Hsü emphasizes the minimal likelihood that two men with identical names could have appeared within a century of each other in the Warring States era.⁴⁶ In addition, the contents of the second part of the book clearly detail the forms of military organization and principles for army practice that probably characterized Ch'in's forces.⁴⁷ The concept of benevolence constituting the proper foundation for all warfare, which is prominent in the first part of the *Wei Liao-tzu*, is also thought to have arisen late in the Warring States period. Because Hsü Yung believes the book is basically homogeneous, he consciously draws the inevitable conclusion that it is the work of a single thinker. He is then compelled to resolve the problem apparently posed by the unbelievable longevity required for Wei Liao to have been active in two courts nearly a century apart by redefining King Hui's period of reign. In brief, Hsü calculates that King Hui did not die until 310 B.C., nine years after the traditionally ascribed date.⁴⁸ Therefore, if a very young Wei Liao—a native of Wei—had been granted an audience at a time when the king was soliciting advice from all persons and quarters, including Mencius, his subsequent interview with a very youthful king of Ch'in would have occurred when he was in his early nineties.⁴⁹ Nothing is heard of him thereafter because he probably died from old age rather than actively assuming some post.⁵⁰ Accordingly, the first twelve chapters of the present book would stem from the miscellaneous text—a product of his youth—and the remaining twelve from the writings consigned to the military classification—the work of his final years.⁵¹ Thus in Hsü's view, all sixty sections originally existed in Pan Ku's time—with the historian perhaps separating them into two works—but they were combined, with losses and accretions over the ages, until constituting the present *Wei Liao-tzu*.⁵²

1. Heavenly Offices¹

King Hui of Liang inquired of Wei Liao-tzu: "Is it true that the Yellow Emperor, through punishments and Virtue,² achieved a hundred victories [without a defeat]?"

Wei Liao-tzu replied: "Punishment was employed to attack [the rebellious], Virtue was employed to preserve [the people].³ This is not what is referred to as 'Heavenly Offices, [auspicious] hours and days, yin and yang, facing toward and turning your back to.' The Yellow Emperor's [victories] were a matter of human effort, that is all. Why was that?"

"Now if there is a fortified city and one attacks it from the east and west but cannot take it, and attacks from the south and north but cannot take it, can it be that all four directions failed to accord with an [auspicious] moment that could be exploited? If you still cannot take it, it is because the walls are high, the moats deep, the weapons and implements fully prepared, the materials and grains accumulated in great quantities, and their valiant soldiers unified in their plans. If the wall is low, the moats shallow, and the defenses weak, then it can be taken. From this perspective, 'moments,' 'seasons,' and 'Heavenly Offices' are not as important as human effort.

"According to the *Heavenly Offices*,⁴ 'deploying troops with water to the rear is referred to as "isolated terrain."⁵ Deploying troops facing a long ridge is termed "abandoning the army."⁶ When King Wu attacked King Chou of the Shang, he deployed his troops with the Chi⁷ River behind him, facing a mountain slope. With 22,500 men he attacked King Chou's hundreds of thousands and destroyed the Shang dynasty. Yet, had not King Chou deployed in accord with the Heavenly Offices?

"The Ch'u general Kung-tzu Hsin was about to engage Ch'i in battle. At that time a comet appeared, with its tail over Ch'i. [According to such beliefs] wherever the tail pointed would be victorious, and they could not be attacked. Kung-tzu Hsin said: 'What does a comet know? Those who fight according to the comet will certainly be overturned and conquered.'⁸ On the morrow he engaged Ch'i and greatly defeated them. The Yellow Emperor said: 'Putting spirits and ghosts first is not as good as first investigating my

own knowledge.' This means that the Heavenly Offices are nothing but human effort."⁹

2. Military Discussions

"Measure the fertility and barrenness of the earth, and then establish towns. To construct the city walls, determine the appropriate terrain.¹⁰ In accord with the city walls, determine the appropriate [number of] men.¹¹ In accord with [the number of] men, determine the appropriate amount of grain. When all three have been mutually determined, then internally one can be solid in defense, and externally one can be victorious in battle.¹² Being victorious in battle externally and preparations¹³ being controlled internally, victory and preparations are mutually employed,¹⁴ like the halves of a tally exactly matching each other.

"Control of the army is as secretive as the [depths of] Earth, as dark and obscure as the [heights of] Heaven,¹⁵ and is given birth from the nonexistent. Therefore it must be opened.¹⁶ The great is not frivolous, the small is not vast.¹⁷

"One who is enlightened about prohibitions, pardons, opening,¹⁸ and stopping up¹⁹ will attract displaced people and bring unworked lands under cultivation.²⁰

"When the land is broad and under cultivation, the state will be wealthy; when the people are numerous and well-ordered, the state will be governed.²¹ When the state is wealthy and well governed, although the people do not remove the blocks [from the chariots] nor expose their armor, their awesomeness instills order on All under Heaven.²² Thus it is said 'the army's victory stems from the court.'²³ When one is victorious without exposing his armor, it is the ruler's victory; when victory comes after deploying [the army], it is the general's victory.²⁴

"The army cannot be mobilized out of personal anger.²⁵ If victory can be foreseen, then the troops can be raised. If victory cannot be foreseen, then [the mobilization] should be stopped. If trouble arises within a hundred *li*, do not spend more than a day mobilizing the forces. If trouble arises within a thousand *li*, do not spend more than a month mobilizing the forces. If the trouble lies within the Four Seas, do not spend more than a year mobilizing the forces.²⁶

"As for the commanding general: Above he is not governed by Heaven, below he is not controlled by Earth, in the middle he is not governed by men. He should be composed so that he cannot be stimulated to anger. He should

be pure so that he cannot be inveigled by wealth.²⁷ Now if the mind is deranged [by emotion], the eyes are blind, and the ears are deaf—to lead men with these three perversities is difficult!

"Wherever the army ventures—whether it is along byways that wind about like sheep's intestines, along roads as bumpy as a saw's teeth, curling about the mountains, or entering a valley—it will be victorious. Whether deployed in a square formation or deployed in a round formation, it will be victorious."²⁸

"A heavy army is like the mountains, like the forests, like the rivers and great streams. A light force is like a roaring fire; like earthen walls it presses upon them, like clouds it covers them.²⁹ They cause the enemy's troops to be unable to disperse and those that are dispersed to be unable to reassemble.³⁰ Those on the left are unable [to rescue those on] the right, those on the right are unable [to rescue those on] the left."³¹

"The weapons are like a mass of trees, the [effects of the] crossbows like a goat's horns.³² Every man, without exception, steps high and displays his courage. Casting off all doubts, fervently and determined, they go forth decisively!"

3. Discussion of Regulations

"As for the military, regulations must first be established. When regulations are established first, the soldiers will not be disordered. When the soldiers are not disordered, punishments will be clear. If wherever the gongs and drums direct them a hundred men all contend; to penetrate the enemy's ranks and cause chaos among his formations a thousand men all strive; and to overturn the enemy's army and kill his generals ten thousand men raise their blades in unison, no one under Heaven will be able to withstand them in battle.

"In antiquity the soldiers were organized into squads of five and ten, the chariots into companies and rows. When the drums sounded and the pennants flew,³³ it never happened that the first to scale the walls were not outstanding state soldiers of great strength! The first to die were also always outstanding state soldiers of great strength. If the enemy suffers a loss of one man and we lose a hundred, it enriches the enemy and greatly diminishes³⁴ us! Through the ages³⁵ generals have been unable to prevent this.

"When conscripts have been assigned to the army but they run off to their native places, or flee when they approach a battle, the harm caused by the deserters is great. Through the ages generals have been unable to prevent it.

"What can kill men beyond a hundred paces are bows and arrows. What can kill a man within fifty paces are spears and halberds. When the general drums [the advance] but the officers and troops yell at each other, twist their arrows to break them, smash their spears, cradle their halberds,³⁶ and find it advantageous to go to the rear, and when the battle commences these all occur, it will be internally self-defeating. Through the ages generals have been unable to prevent them.

"Soldiers losing their squads of five and ten; chariots losing their companies and rows; unorthodox³⁷ forces abandoning their generals and fleeing; the masses also running off—these are things which generals through the ages have been unable to prevent. Now if a general can prevent these four, he will be able to traverse high mountains, cross over deep rivers, and assail strong formations. Being unable to prevent these four is like losing your boat and oars and crossing the Yangtze and Yellow rivers. It cannot be done!

"People do not take pleasure in dying, nor do they hate life, [but] if the commands and orders are clear, and the laws and regulations carefully detailed, you can make them advance. When, before [combat], rewards are made clear, and afterward punishments are made decisive, then when [the troops] issue forth they will be able to realize an advantage, and when they move they will be successful.

"Order that a company [commander]³⁸ be established for one hundred men, a Ssu-ma for one thousand men, and a general for ten thousand men. With a small number you can punish a mass, with the weak you can punish the strong. If you test my words [you will find] their techniques sufficient to ensure that within the masses of the Three Armies, if you execute a single man none will escape punishment. Fathers will not dare conceal their sons, and sons will not dare conceal their fathers, so how much the more so the citizens of the state?

"If a warrior wields a sword to strike people in the marketplace, among ten thousand people there will not be anyone who does not avoid him. If I say it is not that only one man is courageous, but that the ten thousand are unlike him, what is the reason? Being committed to dying and being committed to seeking life are not comparable. If you listen to my techniques, [you will find] they are sufficient to cause the masses of the Three Armies to become a brigand³⁹ committed to dying. No one will stand before them, no one will follow them. They will be able to come and go alone, being the army of a king or hegemon.

"Who led a mass of one hundred thousand and no one under Heaven opposed him? Duke Huan.⁴⁰

"Who led a mass of seventy thousand and no one under Heaven opposed him? Wu Ch'i.

"Who led a mass of thirty thousand and no one under Heaven opposed him? Sun-tzu.

"Today among the armies led by commanders from the various feudal states, there is not one that does not reach a mass of two hundred thousand men. Yet if they are unable to succeed in establishing their merit, it is because they do not understand prohibitions, pardons, opening [the path to life], and stopping up [excessive severity]. If you make the ordinances clear so that one man will be victorious, then ten men will also thereby be victorious. If ten men can be victorious, then one hundred, one thousand, or ten thousand men can also thereby be victorious. Thus I say if you improve our weapons and equipment, nurture our martial courage, when you release [our forces] it will be like a bird attacking, like rushing down a thousand-fathom valley.⁴¹

"Now a state that finds itself in difficulty sends its valuable treasures out with emissaries to other states, sends its beloved sons out as hostages, and cedes land along its borders in order to obtain the assistance of All under Heaven. Although the troops [coming to assist] are said to number one hundred thousand, in actuality they do not exceed several tens of thousands. When their troops come forth there are none to whom [the ruler] has not said to his commanding general: 'Do not be beneath anyone nor be the first to fight.'⁴² In reality one cannot enter battle with them.

"If we measure the population within our borders, without the [system of] five no one could order them. The ordinances regulate the mass of one hundred thousand, and the king must be able to have them wear our uniforms and eat our food. If they are not victorious in battle nor stalwart in defense, it is not the fault of our people for it was internally brought on. The various feudal states under Heaven aiding us in battle are like worn-out old horses with their manes flying trying to compete with legendary swift steeds. How can they supplement our *ch'i*?

"We should employ all the resources under Heaven for our own use, we should govern with all the regulations under Heaven as our own regulations. We should revise our commands and orders and make punishments and rewards clear. We should cause that apart from engaging in agriculture there will be no means to eat, and apart from engaging in battle there will be no means to attain rank. We should cause the people to bump into each other in competing to go out to the farms and into battle. Then under Heaven we will not have any enemies! Thus I say that when a command is promulgated, an order issued, its credibility will extend throughout the state.

"If among the populace there are those who say they can vanquish the enemy, do not allow them to speak idly but absolutely test their ability to fight.

"To look at other peoples' lands and gain them, to divide up other rulers' subjects and nourish them, one must be able to absorb their Worthies. If you are unable to bring in and employ their Worthies but want to possess All under Heaven, you must destroy armies and slay generals. In this way, even though you may be victorious in battle, the state will grow increasingly weak. Even though you gain territory, the state will be increasingly impoverished. All this proceeds from the state's regulations being exhausted."

4. Combat Awesomeness

"In general, [in employing] the military there are those who gain victory through the Tao; those that gain victory through awesomeness; and those that gain victory through strength. Holding careful military discussions and evaluating the enemy, causing the enemy's *ch'i* to be lost and his forces to scatter so that even if his disposition⁴³ is complete he will not be able to employ it, this is victory through the Tao.

"Being precise about laws and regulations, making rewards and punishments clear, improving weapons and equipment, causing the people to have minds totally committed to fighting, this is victory through awesomeness.

"Destroying armies and slaying generals, mounting barbicans and firing crossbows, overwhelming the populace and seizing territory, returning only after being successful, this is victory through strength. When kings and feudal lords know these, the three ways to victory will be complete.

"Now the means by which the general fights is the people; the means by which the people fight is their *ch'i*. When their *ch'i* is substantial they will fight; when their *ch'i* has been snatched away they will run off.

"Before punishment has been applied [to the enemy], before the soldiers have clashed, the means by which one seizes the enemy are five:

1. Discussing the way to victory in the court
2. Discussing [the general] receiving his mandate⁴⁴
3. Discussing crossing the borders⁴⁵
4. Discussing making the moats deep and the fortifications high
5. Discussing mobilizing, deploying, and applying punitive measures [to the enemy]

"In these five cases first evaluate the enemy and afterward move. In this way you can attack their voids and seize them.

"One who excels at employing the army is able to seize men and not be seized by others. This seizing is a technique of mind. Orders [unify]⁴⁶ the

minds of the masses. When the masses are not understood, the orders will have to be changed frequently. When they are changed frequently, then even though orders are issued the masses will not have faith in them.⁴⁷

"Thus the rule for giving commands is that small errors should not be changed, minor doubts should not be publicized. Thus when those above do not [issue] doubtful orders, the masses will not listen to two different [versions]. When actions do not have any questionable aspects, the multitude will not have divided intentions. There has never been an instance where the people did not believe the mind of their leader and were able to attain their strength.⁴⁸ It has never been the case that one was unable to realize their strength and yet attain their deaths in battle.

"Therefore a state must have the righteousness of the forms of etiquette [*li*], trust, familiarity, and love, and then it can exchange hunger for surfeit. The state must first have the customs of filiality, parental love, honesty, and shame, and then it can exchange death for life. When the ancients led the people they invariably placed the rites and trust first, and afterward ranks and emoluments. They put honesty and shame first, and punishments and fines afterward; close relationships and love first, and imposed constraints on their persons afterward.⁴⁹

"Thus those who engage in combat must take leading in person as their foundation in order to incite the masses and officers, just as the mind controls the four limbs. If their minds are not incited, then the officers will not die for honor. When the officers will not die for honor, then the masses will not do battle.

"In order to stimulate the soldiers, the people's material welfare cannot but be ample. The ranks of nobility, the degree of relationship in death and mourning, the activities by which the people live cannot but be made evident. One must govern the people in accord with their means to life, and make distinctions clear in accord with the people's activities. The fruits of the field and their salaries, the feasting of relatives [through the rites of] eating and drinking, the mutual encouragement in the village ceremonies, mutual assistance in death and the rites of mourning, sending off and greeting the troops—these are what stimulate the people.⁵⁰

"Ensure that the members of the squads of five and ten are like relatives, the members of the companies and their officers⁵¹ like friends. When they stop they will be like a solid, encircling wall, when they move like the wind and rain. The chariots will not wheel to the rear, the soldiers will not turn about. This is the Way to establish the foundation for combat.

"Land is the means for nourishing the populace; [fortified] cities the means for defending the land; combat the means for defending the cities.

Thus if one concentrates on plowing the people will not be hungry; if one concentrates on defense the land will not be endangered; if one concentrates on combat the cities will not be encircled. These three were the fundamental concerns of the Former Kings, and among them military affairs were the most urgent.

"Therefore the Former Kings concentrated on five military affairs: When the store of accumulated foodstuffs is not substantial, the soldiers do not set out. When rewards and salaries are not generous, the people are not stimulated. When martial warriors are not selected, the masses will not be strong. When weapons and implements are not prepared, their strength will not be great. When punishments and rewards are not appropriate, the masses will not respect them. If one emphasizes these five, then at rest [the army] will be able to defend any place it secures, and in motion it will be able to attain its objectives.⁵²

"As for remaining within the state and going forth to attack, you want those remaining behind to be 'heavy.' In deploying your troops you want the formations to be solid. In launching an attack you want to make the utmost effort. And in going forth to battle you want to be of one mind.

"The state of a [true] king enriches the people; the state of a hegemon enriches the officers. A state that merely survives enriches the high officials, and a state that is about to perish enriches its own granaries and storehouses. This is termed 'the top being full while the bottom leaks.' When disaster comes there will be no means to effect a rescue.

"Thus I say that if you raise the Worthy and give responsibility to the capable, [even] without the time being propitious affairs will still be advantageous. If you make the laws clear and are cautious in issuing orders, then without performing divination with the tortoise shell or milfoil you will obtain good fortune. If you esteem achievement and nurture effort, without praying you will attain blessings. Moreover it is said, 'The seasons of Heaven are not as good as the advantages of Earth. Advantages of Earth are not as good as harmony among men.' What Sages esteem is human effort, that is all!

"Now when the army is toiling on the march, the general must establish himself [as an example]. In the heat he does not set up an umbrella; in the cold he does not wear heavier clothes. On difficult terrain he must dismount and walk. Only after the army's well is finished does he drink. Only after the army's food is cooked does he eat. Only after the army's ramparts are complete does he rest. He must personally experience the same toil and respite. In this fashion even though the army is in the field for a long time, it will be neither old nor exhausted."⁵³

5. Tactical Balance of Power in Attacks

"The military is victorious through being quiet; a state is victorious through being united.⁵⁴ One whose strength is divided will be weak; one whose mind has doubts will be turned against.⁵⁵ Now when one's strength is weak, advancing and retreating will not be bold, and pursuing an enemy will not result in capturing anyone. Generals, commanders, officers, and troops should be a single body both in action and at rest. But if the commander's mind is already doubtful and the troops inclined to rebellion, then even though a plan has been decided on they will not move, or if movement has been initiated they cannot be controlled. When different mouths speak empty words, the general lacks the proper demeanor, and the troops have not had constant tests [during training], if they set out to attack they will inevitably be defeated. This is what is referred to as a 'hasty, belligerent army.' It is inadequate for engaging in warfare.

"Now the general is the mind of the army, while all those below are the limbs and joints. When the mind moves in complete sincerity, then the limbs and joints are invariably strong. When the mind moves in doubt, then the limbs and joints are invariably contrary. Now if the general does not govern his mind, the troops will not move as his limbs. Then even though the army might be victorious, it will be a lucky victory, not [the result of] the tactical imbalance of power in the attack.⁵⁶

"Now the people do not have two things they fear equally. If they fear us then they will despise the enemy; if they fear the enemy they will despise us. The one who is despised will be defeated; the one who establishes his awesomeness will be victorious. In general, when the general is able to implement the Way [to awesomeness],⁵⁷ his commanders will fear him. When the commanders fear their general, the people will fear their commanders. When the people fear their commanders, then the enemy will fear the people. For this reason those who would know the Tao of victory and defeat must first know about the balance of power of 'fearing' and 'despising.'

"Now one who is not loved and cherished in the minds [of his men] cannot be employed by me; one who is not respected and feared in the minds [of his men] cannot be appointed by me.⁵⁸ Love follows from below, awesomeness is established from above. If they love [their general] they will not have divided minds; if they are awestruck [by their general] they will not be rebellious. Thus excelling at generalship is merely a question of love and awesomeness.

"One who engages in battle but does not invariably win cannot be said to 'do battle.' One who attacks an enemy but does not invariably seize them cannot be said to have 'attacked.'⁵⁹ If it were otherwise, their punishments and rewards were not sufficiently trusted. Credibility [must be established] before the moment of need; affairs [must be managed] before the first signs appear. Thus the masses, when once assembled, should not be fruitlessly dispersed. When the army goes forth it should not return empty-handed. They will seek the enemy as if searching for a lost son; they will attack the enemy as if rescuing a drowning man.

"One who occupies ravines lacks the mind to do battle.⁶⁰ One who lightly provokes a battle lacks fullness of *ch'i*. One who is belligerent in battle lacks soldiers capable of victory.

"Now in general, one who presumes upon righteousness to engage in warfare values initiating the conflict. One who contends out of personal animosity responds only when it is unavoidable. Even though hatreds have formed and troops have been mobilized, await them and value acting after them.⁶¹ During the conflict you must await their advance.⁶² When there is a lull you must prepare [against sudden attacks].

"There are armies that are victorious in the court; those that achieve victory in the plains and fields; and those that attain victory in the marketplace. There are those who fight and gain victory; those that submit and are lost; and those that are fortunate not to be defeated, as in cases where the enemy is unexpectedly frightened and victory is gained by a turn of events. This sort of victory 'by turn of events' is said not to be a complete victory. What is not a complete victory lacks any claim to having effected a tactical imbalance in power. Thus the enlightened ruler, on the day for the attack, will [concentrate on] having the drums and horns sound in unison and regulating their armed might. Without seeking victory he will then be victorious.

"Among armies there are those who abandon their defenses, abolish their awesomeness, and are yet victorious because they have methods. There are those who have early established the use of their weapons so that their response to the enemy is all-encompassing and their general leadership is perfected.

"Thus for five men there is a squad leader, for ten men a lieutenant, for one hundred men a company captain, for one thousand men a battalion commander, and for ten thousand men a general. [This organization] is already all-encompassing, already perfected. If a man dies in the morning, another will replace him that morning; if a man dies in the evening, another will replace him that evening. [The wise ruler] weighs the tactical balance of power

with the enemy, evaluates the generals, and only thereafter mobilizes the army.

"Thus in general, when assembling an army a thousand *li* away, ten days are required and when a hundred *li*, one day, while the assembly point should be the enemy's border.⁶³ When the troops have assembled and the general has arrived, the army should penetrate deeply into their territory, sever their roads, and occupy their large cities and large towns. Have the troops ascend the walls and press the enemy into endangered positions. Have the several units of men and women each press the enemy in accord with the configuration of the terrain and attack any strategic barriers. If you occupy [the terrain around] a city or town and sever the various roads about it, follow up by attacking the city itself. If the enemy's generals and armies are unable to believe in each other, the officers and troops unable to be in harmony, and there are those unaffected by punishments, we will defeat them. Before the rescue party has arrived a city will have already surrendered.

"If fords and bridges have not yet been constructed,⁶⁴ strategic barriers not yet repaired, dangerous points in the city walls not yet fortified, and the iron caltrops not yet set out, then even though they have a fortified city, they do not have any defense!

"If the troops from distant forts have not yet entered [the city], the border guards and forces in other states⁶⁵ not yet returned, then even though they have men, they do not have any men! If the six domesticated animals have not yet been herded in, the five grains not yet harvested, the wealth and materials for use not yet collected, then even though they have resources they do not have any resources!

"Now when a city is empty and void and its resources are exhausted, we should take advantage of this vacuity to attack them. The Art [of War]⁶⁶ says, 'They go out alone, they come in alone. Even before the enemy's men can cross blades with them, they have attained [victory].' This is what is meant."

6. Tactical Balance of Power in Defense

"In general, when the defenders go forth, if they do not [occupy] the outer walls of the cities nor the borderlands⁶⁷ and when they retreat do not [establish] watchtowers and barricades for the purpose of defensive warfare, they do not excel [at defense]. The valiant heroes and brave stalwarts, sturdy armor and sharp weapons, powerful crossbows and strong arrows should all be within the outer walls, and then all [the grain stored outside] in the earthen cellars and granaries collected, and the buildings [outside the outer

walls] broken down and brought into the fortifications. This will force the attackers to expend ten or one hundred times the energy, while the defenders will not expend half of theirs.⁶⁸ The enemy aggressors will be harmed greatly, yet generals through the ages have not known this.

"Now the defenders should not neglect their strategic points. The rule for defending a city wall is that for every *chang* [ten feet], you should employ ten men to defend it—artisans and cooks not being included. Those who go out [to fight] do not defend the city; those that defend the city do not go out [to fight]. One man [on defense] can oppose ten men [besieging them]; ten men can oppose one hundred men; one hundred men can oppose one thousand men; one thousand men can oppose ten thousand men. Thus constructing [a city's] interior and exterior walls by accumulating loose soil [and tamping it down]⁶⁹ does not wantonly expend the strength of the people for it is truly for defense.

"If a wall is one thousand *chang*, then ten thousand men should defend⁷⁰ it. The moats should be deep and wide, the walls solid and thick, the soldiers and people prepared,⁷¹ firewood and foodstuffs provided, the crossbows stout and arrows strong, the spears and halberds well suited. This is the method for making defense solid.

"If the attackers are not less than a mass of at least a hundred thousand⁷² while [the defenders] have an army outside that will certainly come to the rescue, it is a city that must be defended. If there is no external army to inevitably rescue them, then it is not a city that must be defended.

"Now if the walls are solid and rescue certain, then even stupid men and ignorant women will all—without exception—protect the walls,⁷³ exhausting their resources and blood for them. For a city to withstand a siege for one year, the [strength of]⁷⁴ the defenders should exceed that of the attackers and the [strength of] the rescue force exceed that of the defenders.

"Now if the walls are solid but rescue uncertain, then the stupid men and ignorant women—all without exception—will defend the parapets, but they will weep. This is normal human emotion. Even if you thereupon open the grain reserves in order to relieve and pacify them, you cannot stop it. You must incite the valiant heroes and brave stalwarts with their sturdy armor, sharp weapons, strong crossbows, and stout arrows to exert their strength together in the front and the young, weak, crippled, and ill to exert their strength together in the rear.⁷⁵

"If an army of a hundred thousand is encamped beneath the city walls, the rescue force must break open [the siege], and the city's defenders must go out to attack. When they sally forth they must secure the critical positions [along the way]. But the rescue forces to the rear [of the besiegers] should not sever

their supply lines, and the forces within and without should respond to each other.⁷⁶

"In this sort of rescue display a half-hearted commitment. If you display a half-hearted commitment, it will overturn⁷⁷ the enemy and we can await them. They will put their stalwarts in the rear, and place the old in the forefront. Then the enemy will not be able to advance, nor be able to stop the defenders [from breaking out]. This is what is meant by the 'tactical balance of power in defense.'

7. Twelve Insults⁷⁸

"Awesomeness lies in⁷⁹ not making changes. Beneficence lies in according with the seasons.⁸⁰ Perceptivity⁸¹ lies in [promptly] responding to affairs. [Success in] warfare lies in controlling *ch'i*. [Skill in] attacks lies in fathoming externals.⁸² Defense lies in manipulating external appearance. Not being excessive lies in measuring and counting. Not encountering difficulty lies in foresight and preparation. Being cautious lies in respecting the small. Wisdom lies in controlling the large. Eliminating harm lies in being decisive. Gaining the masses lies in deferring to other men.

"Regret arises from relying on what is doubtful. Evil lies in excessive executions. Prejudiced views come from frequently following one's own desires. Inauspicious events arise from detesting to hear about one's errors. Extravagance lies in exhausting the people's resources. Unenlightenment consists in accepting advice [which] separates you [from reality]. Being insubstantial stems from lightly initiating movements. Stubbornness and ignorance lie in separating yourself from the Worthy. Misfortune lies in loving profits. Harm lies in drawing common men near. Disaster lies in lacking any place to defend. Danger lies in lacking [clear] commands and orders."

8. Martial Plans

"In general, [when employing] the military do not attack cities that have not committed transgressions or slay men who have not committed offenses.⁸³ Whoever kills people's fathers and elder brothers; whoever profits himself with the riches and goods of other men; whoever makes slaves of the sons and daughters of other men is in all cases a brigand. For this reason the military provides the means to execute the brutal and chaotic and to stop the unrighteous.⁸⁴ Whenever the army is applied the farmers do not leave their occupations in the fields, the merchants do not depart from their shops, and the officials do not leave their offices, due to the martial plans⁸⁵ all proceed-

ing from one man.⁸⁶ Thus even without the forces bloodying their blades, All under Heaven give their allegiance.

"A state of ten thousand chariots [concentrates on] both agriculture and warfare. A state of one thousand chariots [focuses] on rescuing [others] and on defending [itself].⁸⁷ A state of one hundred chariots [commits itself] to serving and supporting [other states].⁸⁸ Those engaged in agriculture and warfare do not seek any authority [*ch'üan*] outside themselves; those who rescue others and defend themselves do not seek aid outside themselves; and those who serve and support other states do not seek material resources outside themselves. Now if [one's resources] are neither sufficient to go forth to wage battle nor adequate to remain within the borders and defend the state, one must correct [the insufficiency] with markets. Markets are the means to provide for both offensive and defensive warfare. If a state of ten thousand chariots lacks states of one thousand chariots to assist it, it must have markets able to furnish one hundred chariots.

"In general, executions provide the means to illuminate the martial. If by executing one man the entire army will quake, kill him. If by rewarding⁸⁹ one man ten thousand men will rejoice, reward him. In executing, value the great; in rewarding, value the small. If someone should be killed, then even though he is honored and powerful, he must be executed, for this will be punishment that reaches the pinnacle. When rewards extend down to the cowherds and stable boys, this is rewards flowing down [to the lowest]. Now the ability to implement punishments that reach the pinnacle, and rewards that flow down [to the lowest], is the general's martial charisma. Thus rulers value their generals.⁹⁰

"Now when the commanding general takes up the drum, brandishes the drumsticks, and approaches danger for a decisive battle so that the soldiers meet and the naked blades clash—if he drums the advance and they respond to wrest the victory, then he will be rewarded for his achievements and his fame will be established. If he drums the advance but they fail, then he himself will die and the state will perish. For this reason survival⁹¹ and extinction, security and danger all lie at the end of the drumstick! How can one not value the general?

"Now taking up the drums and wielding the drumsticks, having the soldiers collide and the blades clash so that the ruler achieves great success through military affairs I do not find to be difficult. The ancients said, 'Attacking without chariots with protective covering,⁹² defending without equipment such as the caltrops, this is what is meant by an army that does not excel at anything!' Looking without seeing and listening without hearing stem from the state not having markets.

"Now markets are offices for sundry goods."⁹³ [The government should] buy items which are cheap in the market and sell those that have grown expensive in order to restrain the aristocrats and people. People [only] eat one *tou*⁹⁴ of grain, and horses eat three *tou* of beans, so why is it the people have a famished look and the horses an emaciated appearance? The markets have goods to deliver, but the office lacks a controller. Now if you raise the best-trained army under Heaven but do not manage the sundry goods, this is not what is referred to as 'being able to conduct warfare.'

"[To retain men in service] straight from their mobilization to the time when their armor and helmets have become worm infested, they must be men whom we can employ. [This is like] a bird of prey pursuing a sparrow which flies into a man's arms or enters someone's dwelling. It is not that the bird is casting away its life, but that to the rear there is something to fear.

"When T'ai Kung Wang was seventy, he butchered cows at Ch'ao Ko and sold food in Meng Chin. He was more than seventy years old, but the ruler did not listen to him, and people all referred to him as a mad fellow. Then when he met King Wen he commanded a mass of thirty thousand and with one battle All under Heaven was settled. Without his understanding or martial plans, how could they have achieved this unification? Thus it is said, 'If a good horse has a whip, a distant road can be traversed; if Worthies and men of rank unite together, the Great Tao can be illuminated.'

"When King Wu attacked King Chou, the army forded [the Yellow River] at Meng Chin. On the right was the king's pennant, on the left the ax of punishment, together with three hundred warriors committed to die and thirty thousand fighting men. King Chou's formation deployed several hundred thousand men, with [the infamous ministers] Fei Liao and O Lai personally leading the halberdiers and ax bearers. Their lines stretched across a hundred *li*. King Wu did not exhaust the warriors or people, the soldiers did not bloody their blades, but they conquered the Shang dynasty and executed King Chou. There was nothing auspicious nor abnormal; it was merely a case of perfecting oneself, or not perfecting oneself, in human affairs.

"Generals of the present generation investigate 'singular days' and 'empty mornings,' divine about Hsien-ch'ih,⁹⁵ interpret full and disastrous days, accord with tortoise shell augury, look for the auspicious and baleful, and observe the changes of the planets, constellations, and winds—wanting to thereby gain victory and establish their success. I view this as very difficult!

"Now the commanding general is not governed by Heaven above, controlled by Earth below, nor governed by men in the middle. Thus weapons are evil implements. Conflict is a contrary virtue. The post of general is an office of death. Thus only when it cannot be avoided does one employ

them.⁹⁶ There is no Heaven above, no Earth below, no ruler to the rear, and no enemy in the front. The [unified] army of one man is like the wolf and tiger, like the wind and rain, like thunder and lightning. Shaking and mysterious, All under Heaven are terrified by it.

"The army that would be victorious is like water. Now water is the softest and weakest of things, but whatever it collides with—such as hills and mounds—will be collapsed by it for no other reason than its nature is concentrated and its attack is totally committed.⁹⁷ Now if one has the sharpness of the famous sword Mo Yeh, the toughness of rhinoceros hide [for armor], the masses of the Three Armies, and orthodox and unorthodox methods, then under All Heaven no one can withstand him in battle.

"Thus it is said that if you raise the Worthy and employ the talented, even if the hour and day [are not auspicious], your affairs will still be advantageous. If you make the laws clear and are cautious about orders, without divining with the tortoise shell or milfoil you will obtain propitious results. If you honor achievement and nurture effort, without praying you will obtain good fortune. It is also said that 'the seasons of Heaven are not as good as the advantages of Earth; the advantages of Earth are not as good as harmony among men.' The Sages of antiquity stressed human effort, that is all.

"When Wu Ch'i engaged Ch'in in battle, wherever he encamped the army did not flatten the paths between the fields. Young saplings provided protective covering against the frost and dew. Why did he act like this? Because he did not place himself higher than other men. If you want men to die, you do not require them to perform [perfunctory acts of] respect. If you want men to exhaust their strength, you do not hold them responsible for performing the rites. Thus, in antiquity an officer wearing a helmet and armor did not bow, showing people that he is not troubled by anything.⁹⁸ To annoy people yet require them to die, to exhaust their strength, from antiquity until today has never been heard of.

"When the commanding general receives his mandate, he forgets his family. When he commands the army and they encamp in the field, he forgets those close to him. When he takes up the drumsticks and drums [the advance], he forgets himself.

"When Wu Ch'i approached the time for battle, his attendants offered their swords. Wu Ch'i said: 'The general takes sole control of the flags and drums, and that is all. Approaching hardship he decides what is doubtful, controls the troops, and directs their blades. Such is the work of the general. Bearing a single sword, that is not a general's affair.'

"When the Three Armies have assumed formation, they should advance for a day and [on the next day] make a forced march to complete a total of

three days' distance.⁹⁹ Beyond three days' distance they should be like unblocking the source of a river.¹⁰⁰ Observing the enemy in front, one should employ their strength. If the enemy is white, then whiten them; if they are red, then redden them.¹⁰¹

"When Wu Ch'i engaged Ch'in in battle, before the armies clashed one man—unable to overcome his courage—went forth to slay two of the enemy and return with their heads. Wu Ch'i immediately ordered his decapitation. An army commander remonstrated with him, saying: 'This is a skilled warrior. You cannot execute him.' Wu Ch'i said: 'There is no question that he is a skilled warrior. But it is not what I ordered.' He had him executed."¹⁰²

9. The General as a Law Official¹⁰³

"In general, a general is an officer of the law, the ruler of the ten thousand things. It cannot be the personal domain of one man. When it is not the personal domain of one man, the ten thousand things will all come [of themselves] and be governed there, the ten thousand things will all come and be commanded there.

"The perfected man [*chün-tzu*] does not stop criminals more than five paces away. Even though they may shoot at him with barbed arrows, he does not pursue them. He excels at discovering the nature of a criminal's offense. Without relying on thorn branches, he can obtain a complete understanding of the offender's situation."¹⁰⁴

"If you flog a person's back, brand his ribs, or compress his fingers in order to question him about the nature of his offense, even a state hero could not withstand this cruelty and would falsely implicate himself."¹⁰⁵

"There is a saying in our age: 'One who has thousands of pieces of gold will not die; one who has hundreds of pieces of gold will not suffer corporeal punishment.' If you listen to my techniques and try them in practice, then even a person with the wisdom of Yao or Shun will not be able to affect a word [of the charge against him], nor one with ten thousand pieces of gold be able to use the smallest silver piece [to escape punishment].

"At present those in prison awaiting judgment number no less than several tens in the smallest gaols, no less than several hundred in the middle-sized jails, and no less than several thousand in the largest prisons. Ten men entangle one hundred men in their affairs; one hundred men drag in one thousand; and one thousand trap ten thousand. Those that have become entangled are parents and brothers; next relatives by marriage; and next those who are acquaintances and old friends. For this reason the farmers all leave their occupations in the fields, the merchants depart from their stores, and the officials

leave their posts.¹⁰⁶ These good people have all been dragged in because of the nature of our criminal proceedings. The *Art of War* says: 'When an army of ten thousand goes forth, its daily expense is a thousand pieces of gold.'¹⁰⁷ Now when there are ten thousand good people thus entangled and imprisoned, yet the ruler is unable to investigate the situation—I take it to be dangerous!"

10. The Source of Offices

"Bureaucratic offices are the means to control affairs and [are] the foundation of administration. Regulations which divide the people into four groups according to their occupations are the parameters of administration.¹⁰⁸ Honor, rank, riches, and salaries must be appropriately determined for they are the embodiment of nobility and humbleness. Treating the good well and punishing the evil, rectifying the laws for organizing the people, and collecting taxes and impositions are implements for governing the people.¹⁰⁹ Making land distributions equitable and restraining taxes and other impositions on the people provide measure to what is levied and bestowed. Regulating the artisans and [ordering] the preparation of implements for use is the contribution of the master artisans.¹¹⁰ Dividing the territory and occupying the strategic points is the work of eliminating oddities and stopping licentiousness. Preserving the laws, investigating affairs, and making decisions are the roles of subordinates. Illuminating the laws and examining their application are functions of the ruler. Illuminating the duties of the bureaucrats, setting responsibilities as light or heavy—these fall under the authority [*ch'üan*] of the ministers and ruler."¹¹¹

"Making rewards and bestowals clear, being strict in executing and punishing are methods for stopping evil. Being cautious about opening and closing and preserving the single Tao are the essentials of government.¹¹² When [information] from below reaches to high and [the concerns of] high penetrate to below, this is the most sensitive of perceptions. By knowing the extent of the state's resources, you can plan to use the surplus.¹¹³ Knowing the weakness of others is [the way] to embody strength; knowing the movements of others is [the way] to determine quietness.¹¹⁴ Offices are divided into the civil and the martial, and only the ruler exercises power over both.

"The ceremonial vessels are all regulated for the Son of Heaven's convocation. When itinerant persuaders and spies have no means [to gain entrance], this is the technique for rectifying discussions. The feudal lords have their rites for honoring the Son of Heaven, and rulers and their people—generation after generation—continue to acknowledge the king's mandate [to rule].

If someone changes or creates new rites, alters what is normal, or contravenes the king's illustrious Virtue, then in accord with the *li* [rites] the king can attack them.¹¹⁵

"Officials with no affairs to administer, a ruler without rank or rewards [that need to be] bestowed, a populace without criminal cases or lawsuits, a state without traders or merchants¹¹⁶—how perfected the king's rule! What I have so clearly proposed should be well heeded by your Majesty."

11. Governing the Foundation

"In general, what is the Way to govern men? I say that without the five grains¹¹⁷ you have nothing to fill their stomachs, without silk and hemp nothing to cover their form. Thus to fill their stomachs there are grains, and to cover their form there is thread. Husbands work at weeding and plowing, wives at weaving. If the people do not have secondary occupations, then there will be goods accumulated in the storehouses. The men should not engrave nor make decorative carving; the women should not embroider nor do decorative stitching.

"[Carved] wooden vessels emit secretions, [engraved] metal utensils smell offensive. The Sage drinks from an earthen [vessel] and eats from an earthen [vessel]. Thus when clay is formed to make utensils there is no waste under Heaven. Today [people think] the nature of metal and wood is not cold for they embroider their clothes [with them]. The original nature of horses and oxen is to eat grass and drink water, but they give them beans and grains. This is governing which has lost its foundation, and it would be appropriate to establish regulations to control it.

"If in the spring and summer the men go out to the southern fields, and in the fall and winter the women work at weaving cloth, the people will not be impoverished. Today, when their short, coarse clothing does not even cover their bodies nor the dregs of wine and husks of grain fill their stomachs, [the foundation] of government has been lost.

"In antiquity the land was not [classified] as fertile or barren, the people were not [classified] as diligent or lazy. How could the ancients have attained this, how could we have lost it now? The men do not finish plowing their fields, the women daily break their shuttles, so how could they not be hungry and cold? Probably, the administration of the ancients was fully effected, while that of today stops [before thorough implementation].

"Now what I term 'governing well' means causing the people not to have any selfish interests. If the people do not have selfish interests, then All under Heaven will be one family. In the absence of private plowing and weaving, they will suffer the cold together, they will experience hunger together. Then

even if they have ten sons they will not have [the expense of] even an extra bowl of rice, while if they have one son their expenses will not be reduced by even one bowl. Thus where would there be any clamoring and drunken indulgence to ruin the good people?

"When the people stimulate each other to frivolity and extravagance, the misfortunes of the desiring mind and of the competition to seize [things] arise. Perversity begins with one fellow, and then the people seek to selfishly accumulate some extra food and have some stored wealth. If the people then commit a single offense and you arrest them and impose corporeal punishments to control them, how is one acting as the ruler of the people? Those that excel at governing take hold of the regulations, causing the people not to have any selfish interests. When those below do not dare to be selfish, there will not be any who commit evil.

"Return to the foundation, accord with principle, have all issue forth from one Tao, and then the desiring mind will be eliminated. Competition will be stopped, the jails will be empty, the fields full, and the grains plentiful. You will settle the people and embrace the distant. Then outside your borders there will not be any difficulty under Heaven, while within the state there will be neither violence nor turbulence. This is the perfection of administration.

"The azure sky—no one knows its extremity! Of the ancient emperors and Sage kings, who should be your model? Ages that have passed cannot be regained, future ages cannot be awaited. Seek them in yourself.

"There are four qualities for one referred to as the Son of Heaven: 'Spiritual enlightenment,' 'display of brilliance,'¹¹⁸ 'vast discourse,'¹¹⁹ and 'being without enemies.' These are the aspects of the Son of Heaven.

"Wild animals are not used for sacrificial offerings, miscellaneous studies do not make a scholar of attainment. Today people say: 'The hundred *li* of the sea cannot quench one man's [uncontrolled] thirst; a spring three feet deep can slake the thirst of the Three Armies.' I say: 'Desire is born from lack of measure, perversity is born from lacking prohibitions.' The highest ruler transforms in spiritlike fashion, the next relies on things, the lowest relies on not taking the people away from their seasonal work nor seizing the people's wealth. Now prohibitions must be completed through the martial, rewards must be completed through the civil."

12. Tactical Balance of Power in Warfare

"The Art of War¹²⁰ states: 'One thousand men provide the means to exercise the tactical balance of power [*ch'üan*], ten thousand men constitute martial prowess. If you apply the force of tactical power to the enemy first, he will

not be able to commit in strength. If you apply martial prowess first, the enemy will not be able to engage you with his full awesomeness.' Thus the army values being first. If it is victorious in this, then it will conquer the enemy. If it is not victorious in this, then it will not conquer them.

"Now when we go, they come; when we come, they go. These mutually produce victory and defeat. The pattern of battle is thus.

"Now essential sincerity lies in spiritual enlightenment. The tactical balance of power [*ch'üan*] lies in the extremities of the Tao. If you have something, pretend not to have it; if you lack something, appear to have it.¹²¹ Then how can the enemy trust the appearance?

"The reason the Former Kings are still heard about is that they entrusted the upright with responsibility and eliminated the deceitful. They always preserved their benevolent and congenial hearts but were decisive, without delaying, in effecting punishments. One who understands the Tao of Warfare will invariably first plan against the defeats which arise from not knowing where to stop. Why must one always advance to be successful? If you advance too lightly and seek to engage the enemy in battle, should they—on the contrary—plan to stop your going forth, the enemy will control the victory. Thus the Art of War says: 'If they seek us, pursue them; when you see them, attack. When the aggressors dare not oppose us, press the attack, and they will inevitably lose their tactical power.'¹²²

"Those from whom [the initiative] has been taken have no *ch'i*; those who are afraid are unable to mount a defense; those who have suffered defeat have no men.¹²³ They are all cases of an army lacking the Tao [of the military]. When you decide to go forth and have no doubts, then follow your plan. When you rob the enemy [of his plans] and still no one confronts you, press the attack home. If you can see clearly and occupy the high ground, then overawe them [into submission]. This is the pinnacle of the Tao of the military.

"Those who are unguarded in their discussion can be clandestinely listened to. Those who come forth to insult and taunt [your forces] without proper discipline can be destroyed. Those whose attack is like water rushing forth, like lightning striking can throw their army into chaos.¹²⁴ You must settle those [of your troops who are] in crisis, eliminate their worries, and decide matters through wisdom. Be superior to the enemy through discussions in the court; be more majestic and severe than they through discussions on bestowing the mandate [of command]; and arouse their fighting spirit through discussions of crossing the enemy's borders.¹²⁵ Then the enemy state can be forced to submit without fighting."

13. Orders for Severe Punishments

"If a general commanding one thousand men or more retreats from battle, surrenders his defenses, or abandons his terrain and deserts his troops, he is termed a 'state brigand.' He should be executed, his family exterminated, his name expunged from the registers, his ancestral graves broken open, his bones exposed in the marketplace, and his male and female children pressed into government servitude. If the commander of one hundred or more men retreats from battle, surrenders his defenses, or abandons his terrain and deserts his troops, he is termed an 'army brigand.' He should be executed, his family exterminated, and his male and female children pressed into government servitude.

"If you cause the people to fear heavy punishments within the state, then outside the state they will regard the enemy lightly. Thus the Former Kings made the regulations and measures clear before making their awesomeness and punishments heavy. When punishments are heavy, then they will fear them within the state. When they fear them within the state, then they will be stalwart outside it."

14. Orders for the Squads of Five

"Within the army the regulations for organization should be as follows: Five men comprise a squad of five, with all the members being mutually responsible for each other. Ten men comprise a double squad of ten, with all the members being mutually responsible for each other. Fifty men compose a platoon, with all the members being mutually responsible for each other. One hundred men comprise a company, with all the members being mutually responsible for each other.

"If a member of the squad of five violates an order or commits an offense, should the others report it their punishment will be remitted. If they know about it but do not report it, then the entire squad will be punished. If a member of the double squad of ten violates an order or commits an offense, should the others report it their punishment will be remitted. If they know about it but do not report it, then the entire double squad will be punished. If a member of a platoon violates an order or commits an offense, should the others report it their punishment will be remitted. If they know about it but do not report it, then the entire platoon will be punished. If a member of a company violates an order or commits an offense, should the others report it

their punishment will be remitted. If they know about it but do not expose him, the entire company will be punished.

"All the officers—from the level of the double squad of ten up to the generals of the right and left, superiors and inferiors—are mutually responsible for each other. If someone violates an order or commits an offense, those that report it will be spared from punishment, while those who know about it but do not report it will all share the same offense.

"Now when the [members of the] squads of five and ten are mutually bonded and the upper and lower ranks mutually linked, no perversity will remain undiscovered, no offense will remain unreported. Fathers will not be able to cover for their sons, older brothers will not be able to conceal their younger brothers. How much less so will the people of the state, living and eating together, be able to violate orders and conceal each other?"

15. Orders for Segmenting and Blocking Off Terrain

"The Central, Left, Right, Forward, and Rear armies all have their segmented terrain—each surrounded on all four sides by temporary walls—with no passage or communication among them permitted.

"The general has his segmented terrain; the regimental commander has his segmented terrain; and the company¹²⁶ commander has his segmented terrain. They should all construct ditches and sluices and make the orders blocking [communications] explicit so that it is impossible for someone who is not a member of [the company of] one hundred to pass through. If someone who is not a member [of the company] of one hundred enters, then the commander should execute him.¹²⁷ If he fails to execute him, he will share the offense with him.

"Along the roads crisscrossing the encampment, set up administrative posts¹²⁸ every 120 paces. Measure the men and the terrain. The road posts should be within sight of each other. Prohibit crossing over the roads and clear them. If a soldier does not have a tally or token issued by a general or other commanding officer, he cannot pass through. Wood gatherers, fodder seekers, and animal herders all form and move in squads of five. If they are not moving in squads of five, they cannot cross through. If an officer does not have a token, if the soldiers are not in squads of five, [the guards] at the crossing gates should execute them. If anyone oversteps the demarcation lines, execute him. Thus if within the army no one contravenes orders nor vi-

olates the prohibitions, then without there will not be any perversity that is not caught."

16. Orders for Binding the Squads of Five

"The orders which bind the squad of five state: 'Five men comprise the squad of five. They collectively receive a tally from command headquarters. If [in battle] they lose men but capture [or kill] an equivalent number of the enemy, they negate each other. If they capture members of an enemy squad without losing anyone themselves, they will be rewarded. If they lose members without capturing [or killing] equal numbers of the enemy, they will be killed and their families exterminated.

"If they lose their squad leader but capture a squad leader, the two negate each other. If they capture a squad leader without losing their own, they will be rewarded. If they lose their squad leader without capturing an enemy squad leader, they will be killed and their families exterminated. However, if they rejoin the battle and take the head of a squad leader, then their punishment will be lifted.

"If they lose their general but capture [or kill] one, the two negate each other. If they capture a general without losing their own, they will be rewarded. If they lose their general and do not kill an enemy general, they should be considered according to the Law for Abandoning Their Positions and Fleeing."¹²⁹

"The Law for Battlefield Executions states: 'The leader of a double squad of ten can execute the other nine. A company commander can execute the double squad leaders. The general of one thousand men can execute company commanders. The general of ten thousand men can execute the general of one thousand men. The generals of the Armies of the Left and Right can execute the generals of ten thousand men. The Grand General has no one he cannot execute.'"

17. Orders for Regulating the Troops

"To regulate the troops, employ the orders for regulating them to segment them into three [armies]. The Army of the Left will have green flags, and the troops will wear green feathers.¹³⁰ The Army of the Right will have white flags, and the troops will wear white feathers. The Central Army will have yellow flags, and the troops will wear yellow feathers.

"The troops will have five emblems: The front line will have green emblems, the second row red emblems, the third row yellow emblems, the fourth row white emblems, and the fifth row black emblems.

"The next [rule] for regulating the troops is that anyone who loses his emblem will be executed. The first five lines place their emblems on their heads, the next five lines place their emblems on their necks, the next five on their chests, the next five on their stomachs, and the last five on their waists.¹³¹ In this fashion it will never happen that the troops will have someone other than their own officers nor officers other than their own troops. If someone sees a case where it is incorrect but does not inquire about it, or sees confusion but does not act to stop it, the crime will be comparable to that of the offender.

"When the drums sound for [the troops] to move and engage in battle, those lines that move forward confront the danger, while those that retreat to the rear are reviled by the people. Those who venture forward past the five lines will be rewarded; those that race past the five lines to the rear will be executed. By this means it can be known that advancing and retreating, moving to the fore and rear are achievements of the commanders.¹³² Thus it is said: 'If you beat the drum and they advance like a thunderclap, they move like the wind and rain, no one will dare oppose you to the fore, no one will dare follow you to the rear.' This speaks about having regulations."

18. Orders for Restraining the Troops

"Gongs, drums, bells, and flags—these four each have their methods of employment. When the drums sound, the army should advance; when the drums are beat again, they should attack. When the gongs sound, they should stop; when the gongs are struck again, they should withdraw. Bells are used to transmit orders. When the flags point to the left, [the army should] go left; when the flags point to the right, then to the right. Unorthodox units are the opposite.¹³³

"Beat the drum once and the left [foot steps forward]; beat it again and the right [foot advances].¹³⁴ If for each step there is one beat, this is the pace beat. If for ten steps there is one beat, this is the quickstep beat. If the sound is unbroken, this is the racing beat. The *shang* note is that of the general's drum. The *chiao* note is that of a regimental commander's drum. The small drum is that of a company commander. When the three drums sound together the generals, regimental commanders, and company commanders are all of one mind. The unorthodox army is the opposite of this.

"If a drummer misses a beat he is executed. Those that set up a clamor are executed. Those that do not obey the gongs, drums, bells, and flags but move by themselves are executed.

"When combat methods are taught to one hundred men, after their instruction is complete unite them [with other companies] to comprise one thousand men.¹³⁵ When the instruction of one thousand men is complete, unite them [with other regiments] to comprise ten thousand. When the instruction of [the armies of] ten thousand is complete, assemble them into the Three Armies. When the masses of the Three Armies can divide and unite, they can execute the methods of large-scale combat. When their instruction is complete, test them with maneuvers.

"In a square formation they are victorious; in a circular formation they are also victorious; in a jagged array they are also victorious; and if they encounter difficult terrain they will also emerge victorious. If the enemy is in the mountains, climb up after him. If the enemy is in the depths, plunge in after him. Seek the enemy as if searching for a lost child, follow him without any doubt. In this way you will be able to defeat the enemy and control his fate.

"Now one must make decisions early and determine plans beforehand. If plans are not first determined, if intentions are not decided early, then neither advancing nor retreating will be ordered. When doubts arise defeat is certain. Thus an orthodox army values being first; an unorthodox army values being afterward. Sometimes being first, sometimes being afterward—[this is the way] to control the enemy. Generals throughout the ages who have not known this method, after receiving their commission to go forward, were first to launch an attack—relying on courage alone. There were none who were not defeated.

"Their actions seem hesitant but are not; their movements seem to be confident but are not; their movement is at times slow, at times rapid, but is neither slow nor rapid. These three present entanglements in battle."

19. Orders for the General

"When the commanding general is about to receive his commission, the ruler must first discuss military strategy in the ancestral temple, then issue the order in the court. The ruler personally grants the *fu* and *yüeh* axes to the general,¹³⁶ saying: 'The Left, Right, and Central armies have their separate responsibilities. If anyone oversteps the bounds of their responsibility to seek the intercession of higher ranks, he shall be put to death. Within the army there cannot be two [sources of] orders. Anyone who issues a second order

shall be executed. Anyone who delays the implementation of an order shall be executed. Anyone who disobeys an order shall be executed.'

"The General of the Army makes the announcement: 'To those about to go out beyond the gates of the state [capital], the time [for assembling] is set as midday. Within the encampment we shall set up a gnomon and place it at the axle gate. Those who arrive past the designated time will be subject to the provisions of the law.'¹³⁷

"When the General of the Army has entered the encampment, he closes the gate and has the streets cleared. Anyone that dares to travel through them will be executed. Anyone that dares to talk in a loud voice will be executed. Those that do not follow orders will be executed."

20. Orders for the Vanguard

"What is referred to as 'the vanguard'¹³⁸ moves off from the main force about one hundred *li*, assembling at a designated place and an appointed time. It carries a three-day [supply of] prepared food. It moves in front of the main army. Pennants are made for uniting to engage in battle.¹³⁹ Then when a pennant for engaging in battle is raised,¹⁴⁰ the vanguard feasts its soldiers¹⁴¹ and has them deploy into a strategic configuration of power [*shih*] for battle. They are referred to as 'racing to battle.'

"The advance army moves in front of the vanguard. When the pennant for engaging in battle is raised, it moves off from the main force double the [vanguard's] distance—about one hundred *li* ahead of the vanguard—assembling at a designated place and time. They carry a six-day [supply of] prepared food. They are ordered to prepare for the battle and deploy troops to occupy the strategic positions. If the battle turns to the [army's] advantage, they pursue the retreating enemy; if the forces are stalemated, they race into [the enemy]. If the vanguard encounters anyone who has turned back, they should execute him. What are termed the 'armies of the various generals,' consisting of four unorthodox forces,¹⁴² will wrest victory.

"The army has its squads of ten and five and [the methods of] dividing and reuniting. Before [engaging in battle] duties are assigned, and designated units should occupy the strategic locations, passes, and bridges. When the pennant for uniting to engage in battle is raised, they should all assemble. The main army sets out with a fixed daily ration and their combat equipment all complete. The orders are issued and they move; anyone who does not follow orders is executed.

"Now determine and assign forces to the strategic points within the four borders of the state. After the advance army and vanguard have already set

out, the people within the borders are not able to move about. Those who have received the king's commands, who have been given and carry the proper tallies and tokens are called 'officers acting in accord with their duties.' Officers who are not acting in accord with their duties but yet move about should be executed. When the pennant for uniting to engage in battle is raised, these officers—acting in accord with their duties—travel about and are employed to ensure that affairs are mutually regulated.¹⁴³ Accordingly, one who wants to wage warfare must first secure the interior."

21. Military Instructions I

"Orders for instructing the soldiers: Disperse them to their encampments, and have them assume formation. Those who advance or retreat contrary to orders should be punished for the crime of contravening instructions.

"The front lines are instructed [by the commander of] the front lines; the rear lines are instructed [by the commander of] the rear lines; the lines to the left are instructed [by the commander of] the lines on the left; the lines to the right are instructed [by the commander of] the lines to the right. When all five men [in a line] have been successfully instructed, their squad leader is rewarded. Failing to successfully instruct all of them will result in [being punished] as though one had committed the crime of contravening instructions.¹⁴⁴ If someone who has fallen ill¹⁴⁵ brings it to the attention of the squad by himself and the squad members jointly report it, they will be spared from punishment.

"In general, when the squad of five assumes formation for battle, if one of the men does not advance and face death at the enemy, his instructor [will be punished] as if he had committed the crime of contravening the law. The double squad of ten guarantees the ten men within it. If they lose a man and the other nine men do not fight to the death in a desperate battle with the enemy, then their instructor [will be punished] as if he had committed the crime of contravening the law. From the double squad up to the subordinate generals, if anyone does not follow the laws, their instructors [will be punished] as if they had committed the crime of contravening the law. In general, to make punishments and fines clear and incentives and rewards correct, they must fall within the laws for instructing the soldiers.

"Generals have different flags, companies have different emblems. The Army of the Left wears their emblems on the left shoulder; the Army of the Right wears their emblems on the right shoulder; the Central Army wears their emblems on the front of the chest. Record their emblems as 'a certain armored soldier' and 'a certain officer.' From front to rear, for [each platoon

of] five lines the most honored emblems are placed on the head, the others accordingly lower and lower.¹⁴⁶

"The squad leader instructs the other four men using a board as a drum, a piece of tile as a gong, and a branch as a flag. When he strikes the drum they should advance; when he lowers the flag they should race forward; when he strikes the gong they should withdraw. When he points [left] they should go to the left; when he points [right] they should go to the right. When the gongs and drums are struck together they should sit.

"When the squad leader has completed instructing the squad, they should be united [with another squad] under a leader for a double squad of ten. When the double squad leader has completed instructing them, they should be united under a platoon commander. When the platoon commander has completed instructing them, they should be united under a company commander. When the company commander has completed instructing them, they should be united under an army commandant.¹⁴⁷ When the army commandant has completed instructing them, they should be united under a subordinate general. When the subordinate general has completed instructing them, they should be united under the commanding general.

"When the commanding general has completed instructing them, he has them deploy into formation in the countryside. He sets up three large posts, one every hundred paces, and has the formation move away from them. They advance one hundred paces and practice weaponry.¹⁴⁸ They quickstep for a hundred paces and then race for another hundred paces. They practice battle tactics in order to attain the measure [set by the general]. Afterward, rewards and punishments should be implemented.

"From the commandant down, every officer has a flag. When the battle has been won, in each case look at the rank of the flags that have been captured in order to stimulate their hearts with clear rewards.¹⁴⁹

"Victory in war lies in establishing awesomeness. Establishing awesomeness lies in uniting strength.¹⁵⁰ Uniting strength lies in rectifying punishments. By rectifying punishments rewards are illuminated.

"Today if the people turn their backs to the border gates and decide the issue of life and death, if they have been taught to die without hesitation there is a reason.¹⁵¹ [Training and instructions] have caused the defenders to inevitably be solid; those engaged in battle to inevitably fight; perverse plans not to be put into action; perverse people not to speak; orders to be effected without any changes; the army to advance without doubt; and the light units to be like a clap of thunder—to rush at the enemy like the terrified. Raise those of merit, distinguish those of virtue, making their distinction as clear as black and white. Cause the people to follow the orders of their superiors just as the four limbs respond to the mind.

"If the forward units break up the enemy's ranks, throw his formation into chaos, and crush his hardness like water bursting through, there is a basis for it. This is termed the 'army's instructions.' They provide the means to open sealed borders, preserve the altars of state, eliminate disaster and harm, and complete Martial Virtue."

22. Military Instructions II

"I have heard that a ruler of men must attain the Tao of certain victory. Thus to be able to unite others and become expansive and great, to unify the ordinances and regulations and have his awesomeness prevail in the world, there are twelve essential matters:

"The first is called 'connected punishment' and refers to the method of joint criminal responsibility for all members of the squad of five.

"The second is 'terrain restrictions,' which refers to prohibiting and stopping passage along the roads in order to ensnare external, perverse forces.

"The third, 'preserving the chariots,'¹⁵² refers to the chariot commanders and infantry leaders being mutually dependent, the three [officers in the chariot] and the squads of five being cohesive in order to bind them together.

"The fourth, 'opening and plugging up,'¹⁵³ refers to dividing the terrain with boundaries and having each man die performing his appointed function, securely defending his position.

"The fifth, 'demarking boundaries,' refers to the left and right restraining each other, front and rear awaiting each other, and a wall of chariots creating a solid defense in order to oppose the enemy and stop [them].¹⁵⁴

"The sixth, 'commands are distinguished,' refers to the forward rows concentrating on advancing, thereby being distinguished from those in the rear who are not able to compete to be the first to ascend¹⁵⁵ nor overstep their positions.

"The seventh, 'five emblems,' refers to distinguishing the rows [with emblems] so that the troops will not be disordered.¹⁵⁶

"The eighth, 'preserving the units,' refers to the units breaking up and following each other, each having their appointed sections.

"The ninth, 'gongs and drums,' refers to stimulating them to achievement and compelling them to virtue.

"The tenth, 'arraying the chariots,' refers to making the formation tight, with the spears deployed to the front,¹⁵⁷ and putting blinders on the horses' eyes.

"The eleventh, 'warriors of death,' refers to selecting the talented and wise¹⁵⁸ from among masses of the army to ride in the war chariots. They race

forward and back, across and about, using unorthodox tactics to gain mastery over the enemy.

"The twelfth, 'strong troops,' refers to regulating the flags¹⁵⁹ and preserving the units. Without the flags [signaling an order], they do not move.

"When the instructions for these twelve have been successfully taught, anyone who contravenes an order should not be pardoned. If the army is weak, they will be able to strengthen it. If a ruler is unknown, they will be able to honor him. If orders become enervated, they will be able to revitalize them. If the people become migrants, they will be able to attract them. If the people are numerous, they will be able to govern them. If the territory is vast, they will be able to defend it. Without the state's chariots crossing the thresholds nor the variegated armor being taken out of the storage bags, your awesomeness will cause All under Heaven to submit.

"Soldiers have five defining commitments:¹⁶⁰ For their general they forget their families; when they cross the border they forget their relatives; when they confront the enemy they forget themselves; when they are committed to die they will live; urgently seeking victory is the lowest. One hundred men willing to suffer the pain of a blade can penetrate a line and cause chaos in a formation. One thousand men willing to suffer the pain of a blade can seize the enemy and kill its general. Ten thousand men willing to suffer the pain of a blade can transverse under Heaven at will."

King Wu asked T'ai Kung Wang: "In a short time¹⁶¹ I want to exhaustively attain the essentials of employing men." Wang replied: "Your rewards should be like mountains, your punishments like valleys. The supreme makes no errors, the next corrects his mistakes.¹⁶² Now anyone who, when about to be punished, requests that he not be punished should die. Anyone who, when about to be rewarded, requests that he not be rewarded should die."¹⁶³

"Attack a country according to its changes.¹⁶⁴ Display riches in order to observe their poverty. Display exhaustion in order to observe their illness. If the ruler is immoral and the people disaffected, in cases such as these one has a basis for attack.

"In general, whenever about to mobilize the army, you must first investigate the strategic balance of power [*ch'üan*] both within and without the borders in order to calculate whether to mount a campaign. [You must know] whether the army is well prepared or suffers from inadequacies, whether there is a surplus or shortage of foodstuffs. You must determine the routes for advancing and returning. Only thereafter can you mobilize the army to attack the chaotic and be certain of being able to enter his state.

"If the territory is vast but the cities small, you must first occupy their land. If the cities are large but the land narrow, you must first attack their cit-

ies. If the country is vast and the populace few, then isolate their strategic points. If the land is confined but the people numerous, then construct high mounds in order to overlook them. Do not destroy their material profits nor seize the people's agricultural seasons. Be magnanimous toward his government [officials], stabilize [the people's] occupations, and provide relief for their impoverished for then [your Virtue] will be sufficient to overspread All under Heaven.

"Today warring states attack each other and mount large-scale assaults on the virtuous. From the squads to the platoons, from the platoons to the army, none have unified orders. They cause the people to have unsettled minds; they only incline toward arrogance and extravagance. Their plans are calamities; they are constantly involved in disputes, so the officers spend their time investigating matters. These are entanglements and moreover bring about defeat. Even after the sun has set the road remains long, and when [the soldiers] return to camp they are dispirited. The army is old, the general covetous. Since he will fight to seize material gains, he is easily defeated.

"When the general is light, the fortifications low, and the people's minds unstable, they can be attacked. If the general is weighty and the fortifications are high but the masses are afraid, they can be encircled. In general, whenever you encircle someone you must provide them with a prospect for some minor advantage, causing them to become weaker day by day.¹⁶⁵ Then the defenders will be forced to reduce their rations until they have nothing to eat. When their masses fight with each other at night, they are terrified. If the masses avoid their work, they have become disaffected.¹⁶⁶ If they just wait for others to come and rescue them and when the time for battle arrives they are tense, they have all lost their will¹⁶⁷ and are dispirited. Dispirit defeats an army; distorted plans defeat a state."

23. Army Orders¹⁶⁸ I

"Weapons are inauspicious implements. Conflict is a contrary Virtue.¹⁶⁹ All affairs must have their foundation. Therefore when a true king attacks the brutal and chaotic, he takes benevolence and righteousness as the foundation for it. [At the present time] the warring states then establish their awesomeness, resist their enemies, and plot against each other. Thus they cannot abandon their armies.

"The military takes the martial as its trunk, and takes the civil as its seed.¹⁷⁰ It makes the martial its exterior, and the civil the interior. One who can investigate and fathom the two will know victory and defeat. The civil is

the means to discern benefit and harm, to discriminate security and danger. The martial is the means to contravene a strong enemy, to forcefully attack and defend.

"One who is unified will be victorious;¹⁷¹ one who is beset by dissension will be defeated. When formations are tight they are solid; when the front is dispersed it can attain its [objectives].¹⁷² One whose troops fear their general far more than the enemy will be victorious. One whose troops fear the enemy far more than their general will be defeated. Thus to know who will be victorious, who defeated, weight your general with the enemy. The enemy and your general are like a steelyard and balance. If [the general] is settled and quiet, [the troops] are well-ordered; if he is brutal and hasty, they are in chaos.¹⁷³

"Sending troops forth and deploying the army have standard orders; the dispersal and density of the lines and squads have standard methods; and arraying the rows from front to rear has its appropriateness and suitability. Standard orders are not employed when pursuing a fleeing enemy or suddenly striking a city. If the front and rear are disordered, then [the army] loses [its integrity]. If anyone causes confusion among the lines, behead him.

"The standard deployment for formations is always facing toward the enemy. There are also internally oriented formations, externally oriented formations, standing formations, and sitting formations. Internally oriented formations provide the means to preserve the center; externally oriented formations provide the means to prepare against external threats. Standing formations are the means to move, sitting formations the means to stop. Mixed formations—with some soldiers standing, others sitting—respond to each other in accord with the need to move or stop, with the general being in the middle. The weapons of the seated soldiers are the sword and ax; the weapons of the standing soldiers are the spear-tipped halberd and crossbow; the general also occupies the middle.

"Those who excel at repulsing the enemy first join battle with orthodox troops, then [use unorthodox ones] to control them. This is the technique for certain victory.

"Array the *fu* and *yüeh* axes [for punishment], make a display of the emblems and flags [used as rewards]. Those who have merit must be rewarded; those who contravene orders must die. The preservation or destruction of the state and the life or death of the soldiers lie at the tips of the [general's] drumsticks. Even though there are those under Heaven who excel at commanding armies, no one will be able to repulse them.

"Before arrows have been shot and cross in flight, before the long blades have clashed, those who yell out first are termed 'vacuous,' those who yell

out afterward are termed 'substantial,' and those who do not yell are termed 'secretive.' 'Vacuous' and 'substantial' are the embodiment of warfare."

24. Army Orders¹⁷⁴ II

"Units are dispatched from the main army to undertake advance preparations for defense. They should set up observation posts along the borders every three to five *li*. When they hear that the main army is making preparations to advance, mount a defense, and engage in battle, they should prohibit all movement in order to provide security to the state.

"When troops from the interior are about to set out for border duty, have the commanding officer provide them with their flags, drums, halberds, and armor. On the day for issuing forth, anyone who arrives after the commanding officer has gone out beyond the district border shall be liable for the law for late arrival for border duty.

"The term of border duty for a soldier is one year. Anyone who leaves before being replaced shall be punished analogously to the law for deserting the army. If his parents, wife, or children know about it, they will share the crime with him. If they do not know about it, pardon them.

"If a soldier arrives at the headquarters of the Grand General a day after his commanding officer, his parents, wife, and children should all share the crime with him. If a soldier abandons his post to return home for a day and his parents, wife, or children do not arrest [him], hold him, or report it, they should also share the crime with him.

"If they should lose their commanding officer in battle, or if their commanding officer should abandon his troops and flee by himself, behead them all. If a forward officer should abandon his troops and flee, any officer to the rear who is able to kill him and reassemble his troops should be rewarded. Anyone [among such troops] who has not achieved merit within the army must serve three years at the border.¹⁷⁵

"If the Three Armies engage in a major battle and the Grand General dies, all of the subordinate officers commanding units of more than five hundred men who were not able to fight to the death with the enemy should be beheaded. All the troops near to the commanding general, on the left and right in [protective] formation, should be beheaded. As for the remaining officers and men in the army, those who have military merit should be reduced one grade. Those who do not have military merit should be rescripted to three years' border duty.

"If the squad of five loses a man in battle, or if a squad member dies in battle but they do not retrieve his corpse, then take away all the merit of all his

squad members. If they retrieve his corpse, then their crimes should all be pardoned.

"The army's advantage and disadvantage lie with name and substance [cohering throughout] the state. Today if a person's name appears as holding a particular [military] office but in reality he is at home, then the office has not gained the substance [of his presence], and the household has not gained the [registration of] his name. When troops are assembled to compose an army, it will have an empty name without substance. Outside the state it will be inadequate to repel enemies, while within the borders it will be inadequate to defend the state. This is the way in which the army becomes insufficient, in which the general has his awesomeness taken away.

"I believe that when soldiers abandon their units and return home, the other members of their squad in the same barracks and their officers should be punished for taking their rations for their own consumption, [the deserters'] names being shown as the army's substance. Thus a person is nominally with the army, but in reality double the ration is expended.¹⁷⁶ The resources of the state are then empty, and the harvests of the people are naturally exhausted. How can the disaster of defeat be avoided?

"Today if they are stopped from returning home by the laws, this prevents the loss of an army and is the first military victory. When the squads of five and ten are mutually bound to the point that in battle the troops and officers will aid each other, this is the second military victory. If the general is able to establish his awesomeness, the soldiers to master and follow their instructions, while the commands and orders are clear and trusted, and attacking and defending are both properly executed, this is the third military victory.

"I have heard that in antiquity those who excelled in employing the army could [bear to] kill¹⁷⁷ half of their officers and soldiers. The next could kill thirty percent and the lowest ten percent. The awesomeness of one who could sacrifice half of his troops affected all within the Four Seas. The strength of one who could sacrifice thirty percent could be applied to the feudal lords. The orders of one who could sacrifice ten percent would be implemented among his officers and troops. Thus I say that a mass of a hundred ten thousands that does not follow orders is not as good as ten thousand men who fight. Ten thousand men who fight are not as good as one hundred men who are truly aroused.

"When rewards are like the sun and moon, credibility is like the four seasons, orders are like the *fu* and *yüeh* axes, and regulations are as [sharp as the famous sword] *Kan-chiang*, I have never heard of officers and troops not following orders!"

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Three Strategies of Huang Shih-kung

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I Superior Strategy 292

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III Inferior Strategy 303

Translator's Introduction

Origin of the *Three Strategies*

Popular Chinese tradition has historically attributed three military writings—the *Six Secret Teachings*, the *Three Strategies of Huang Shih-kung*, and the esoteric *Yin Fu (Hidden Symbols)*—to the famous general, strategist, and political thinker Chiang Shang, best known as the T'ai Kung. As with most ancient Chinese works there are numerous problems with the text of the *Three Strategies* and the usual questions about its authenticity. However, even if the book were a "valueless forgery"—as claimed by the numerous Confucians who vehemently denounced its purported brutality—it would still demand serious study because of its antiquity, complex content, and manifest influence on subsequent military thinkers in China and eventually in Japan.¹ In its present form the language, subject matter, and presentation suggest it dates from near the end of the first century B.C.,² although four other views (which are summarized below) propose rather different interpretations.

The *Three Strategies* attained historical prominence through Chang Liang's critical accomplishments in establishing the power and consolidating the authority of the Han dynasty during the turmoil and violent insurrections that overthrew the repressive, short-lived Ch'in dynasty. The story of its sudden appearance typifies semilegendary Chinese historical accounts, although circumstances can be construed to suggest a possible line of transmission extending back through the obscurity of time to the T'ai Kung himself. According to this tradition, the *Three Strategies* records the aging Sage's pronouncements after being enfeoffed as king of Chi'i—a state on the periphery of Chou culture—following the conquest of the Shang dynasty. Subsequently, the individual spontaneous statements—recorded in disjointed fashion—were collected, edited, and systematized. This task was probably performed by Ch'i's official court historian, with the work thereafter being secretly preserved by successive generations because of its great military